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IN QUEST OF COOLIES

JAMES L. A. HOPE





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IN QUEST of COOLIES.

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THE SICK CHIEF.

IN QUEST of COOLIES.

BY

JAMES L. A. HOPE.

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WITH ILLUSTRATIONS.

LONDON:

HENRY S. KING & Co., 65 CORNHILL.

1872.

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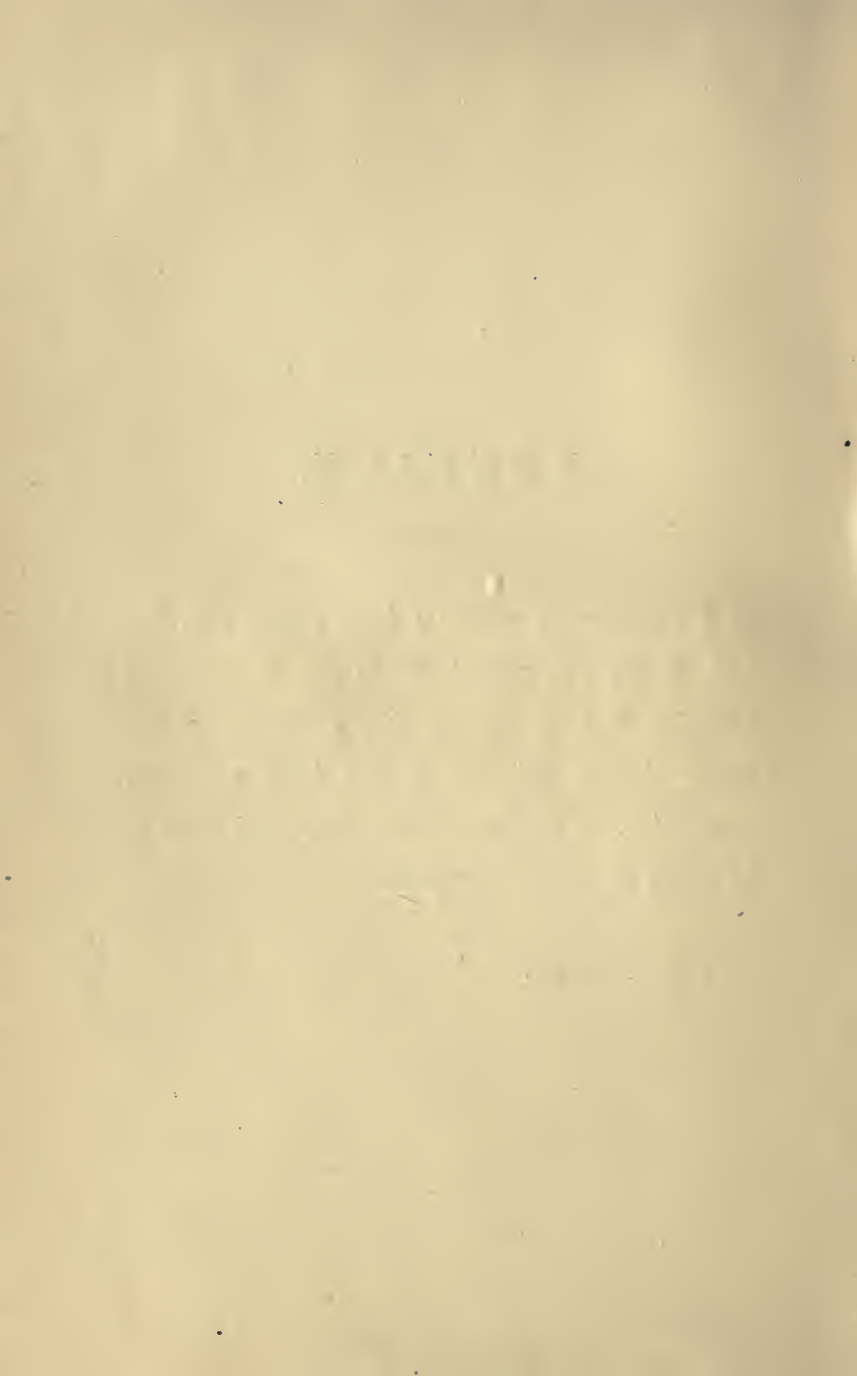
PREFACE.



IN THE FOLLOWING SKETCH I have simply told the tale of my own adventures in the South Seas; believing that, in the coming discussion on the Coolie System, evidence at first hand will have some value. I merely advance facts, and leave it to others to draw conclusions.

LONDON: *Feb.* 1872.

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THE ISLAND OF MARÉ.

CHAPTER I.

I see Kanakas for the first time—Cry of Slavery raised—‘Advance Australia!’—Old Tom’s Reminiscences—Friendly Advice.

QUEENSLAND has of late been praised, lectured upon, and written about *ad nauseam*, so that, though I have enjoyed considerable experience of that colony amongst sheep, cattle, and sugar growers, I am unwilling to inflict a repetition of the dose on anyone who does me the honour to read my book, and mean therefore to confine myself entirely to the subject of the South Seas and the men who come thence to work for us as coolies, seen from a Queenslander’s point of view ; and on this subject I feel competent

to offer an opinion, believing myself to be the only man who has written an account of a trip undertaken in person to recruit the labour which the Queenslanders make so much use of now, and over which many people, both in the colony and in England, have raised the cry of slavery and kidnapping.

Coming suddenly down into the civilised districts near Brisbane, after a long sojourn in the interior of Queensland, a sight struck us that caused me and my two black stockmen to rub our eyes, and look again. A luxuriant cane-field waved dark green over a spot which a few years before had been only covered with the 'everlasting gum-tree'—

Ere the base laws of servitude began,
When wild in woods the noble savage ran.

Having had a long experience of the aboriginal darkie, I knew at once that the row of men working with hoes in their hands, in the heat of the sun, could never belong to any species that I had seen before; for you have but to ask an Australian native to chop a little wood, to send him stalking off in his native dignity without more words. No! these men—round-limbed, broad-footed, and woolly-haired—were evidently strangers; and my boys, after a long and careful inspection, were so struck by the ridiculous

idea of working in the sun like that (why they could not have been greater fools had they been white men !), that they burst into yells of laughter, making the woods echo again with their shrill ha-ha-hoo, till all the Australian woodpeckers, or laughing jackasses, on the trees around laughed and shrieked in chorus.

My further acquaintance with these men, far from making me feel inclined to laugh, has given me a feeling of considerable liking for them, and has shown me their immeasurable superiority over the degraded and rum-loving race which is either all that remains to us of a widely-spread and perhaps once partially-civilised nation peopling the whole of Australia, or perhaps a mere link in Mr. Darwin's chain of evidence that, after all, the best of us is not so very far removed from an ape.

The South Sea Islands coolie has been and will be a person of great importance both to the Australian settlers themselves and to politicians at home ; and my object in writing the present work is to show who he is, whence he comes, and how he is treated in the colony of Queensland, which has now—partly thanks to him—developed an entirely new and flourishing industry, which promises to rival, if not to surpass, sugar-growing in the West Indies.

Years ago, if you wanted to introduce an unpopular subject, all you had to do was to advocate the introduction of coolies ; and English, Germans, and Chinamen alike resented the idea of the importation of black labour into Queensland ; and not finding any just reason for their objection, would immediately raise the cry of ‘slaves!’ and point to the late terrible civil war in America, and the millions expended by England for extirpating slavery in the West Indies, and say, ‘All this will come on the colony if you allow black labour on any pretext to be established here.’

About the year 1868, however, several small sugar-planters, seeing that with the then existing rate of wages and scarcity of labour, sugar-growing, in which they had invested all their capital, would never pay, ventured to charter some small ships and to bring over to us the South Sea Islands coolie, fetching him from the large group of islands called the New Hebrides, lying within about ten days’ sail of our coast, and densely crowded with a population who, having nothing to do and sometimes very little to eat, spent their whole time killing one another, not as we do in Europe, for the sake of an idea, but for the sake of a dinner.

The ‘King Oscar,’ ‘Spunkie,’ ‘Jason,’ ‘Daphne,’ and

many other little vessels, sailed for these islands, and according to all accounts some of their crews did overstep the bounds of legitimate recruiting for labour. I had no very intimate knowledge of the matter at that time, and Captain Palmer, of H.M.S. 'Rosario,' has already told us his story of the cruise of the 'Daphne,' which—judging from a conversation I had subsequently with one of the crew of that vessel, then a refugee on the Island of Tauna—I believe to be perfectly true, though Captain Palmer failed to convince the authorities at Sydney to that effect. Now that we can look at the subject dispassionately, even the planters will not care to deny that the system, as then carried on, was liable to grave abuses.

At all events the men were brought over, some from the French Loyalty Islands, and some, as I said, from the New Hebrides, and their arrival very soon produced a change in the aspect of the coast country of Queensland. Squatters sold their sheep and bought sugar plantations, foundries for machinery sprang up in Brisbane, trade improved, and the old virgin forest was turned for miles along the coast into flourishing farms.

The English working-man soon found, much to his disgust, that, instead of being indispensable as

heretofore, he could no longer make quite his own terms for wages, and the 'coolie trade,' as it was called, was made a question at every election, many pledging themselves to support no candidate till he had given his promise to vote for the prohibition of black labour. I remember one planter, on coming forward, being greeted with cries of 'How much a dozen did you give for them?' till he had to give up the attempt in disgust.

The question as to what we are to do with our colonies has been continually under discussion. Have we not millions of acres of good arable and pasture land, a decent climate, an inexhaustible supply of coal, copper and gold, an easy Government and tolerably wise Ministers, and yet who can say that Australia prospers as she ought to do? who can deny that in any vital point she is so far behind America that no stranger would believe she had been colonised by the same mother-country? It is in vain that her sons wish and drink prosperity to her, that the cry is 'Advance Australia, and speed the plough!' The plough does not speed a bit the faster, simply because there are not hands enough to hold it. Let the English Government really put its shoulder to the wheel; let it find out that in a well-managed system of emigration lies the solu-

tion of most, if not all, its growing difficulties, and that it is the great key to the vexed question of pauperism, and the most profitable way of at once educating and reforming what politicians are pleased to call the dangerous classes. While money lies idle in London, and the mere mention of Australian securities makes any capitalist instinctively button his breeches-pocket, and while the poor either starve in the streets or are glad to get into gaols as vagrants, here lies before us a vast country which those same two forces, money and men, would soon convert into a smiling Eden. Let the English Government once organise a system of assisting emigrants that will land them in Australia by thousands with work before them, where it now sends hundreds, and instead of being a distant and unknown world, still popularly supposed to be fit only for kangaroos and convicts, she may yet be a prop to the old country in the not far distant days when she will be forced to look round for an ally in the great wars that are already throwing their dark shadow over us.

But the future of England, politically considered, is not the title of this work. What we have to do with is the present condition of the South Sea Islanders ; and in the meantime, till the English

labourer does come, the planters are only too glad to get the coolie to fill his place, and value him greatly for want of something better.

For nearly two years the importation of coolies had ceased, principally because no one could persuade them to come, and the planters looked forward to the expiration of their three years' agreement with the labourers then in the colony with dismay. The fact was that the Islanders at home suspected us, as I verily believe, of having eaten their countrymen, and were unwilling to trust themselves with the white men without further knowledge of their nature.

Now we have all heard of the South Seas, and, for my part, 'Masterman Ready' had always been a rival of 'Robinson Crusoe' in my affections; and coral, cocoa-nuts and cannibalism were three things I had determined from my earliest childhood to see for myself. Years ago I had heard from an old shepherd, in whose hut I was living as sheep overseer, of his cruises in the South Seas. He used to pour into my ear by the hour descriptions, which I am bound to say were a good deal coloured by his own imagination, of the romantic beauty of these islands, of the desperate fights the 'sandal-wood getters' used to have with the natives, and especially how, having

run away from his ship, he lived a sort of Garden of Eden life among the natives, and was looked up to and revered as a king by these simple people. This part of his story is, however, of dubious authenticity, as anyone less likely to be revered I never came across than old Tom was when I last saw him.



ABORIGINE WHEN ASKED TO WORK.



THE LAST PURCHASE.

CHAPTER II.

I decide to go—Polynesian Labourers Act—I start for the South Seas—Native Trade—What a Coolie takes back with him from Queensland.

AT LAST, however, in the year 1870, finding that no one could bring us men, and that the plantations were going to ruin for want of hands, I up made my mind to go myself, and make one attempt to procure labourers to keep alive a little longer sugar-growing in Queensland.

I will not inflict on my readers the whole of what

I went through as soon as I made known my determination : how I was advised to make my will, how I was offered a choice assortment of revolvers and breechloading rifles, how I experienced a sudden increase of friendliness on the part of the storekeepers and merchants who had goods to dispose of, how every drunken sailor about the place professed himself to be the only man who knew anything of the trade, and how one man gravely informed me the *modus operandi* was this—You took a trade musket, value about fifteen shillings, and having found a chief, presented it to him, requiring so many men, upon which he said to his subjects, ‘ You go to Queensland ; when you get there, in about a month’s time white man will probably eat you ; but if you dare to stop here, I’ll eat you myself to-morrow ! ’

The Polynesian Labourers Act, passed by the Queensland Government in 1868, obliges employers to enter into heavy bonds on applying for leave to import coolies, and further regulates the scale of provisions with which they are to be supplied, giving them (what few English labourers in the south of England can make sure of) 1 lb. meat and 1 lb. flour per diem, with vegetables, tobacco, tea, sugar, and soap ; and causes vessels fetching them from the islands to be fitted up with separate and raised

sleeping-places, allowing 144 cubic feet of space for each man, and good conveniences for cooking, &c.

The Act further provides that the immigrants shall be furnished, immediately on their coming on board, with shirts, trousers, and blankets, and imposes a penalty of 50*l.* on any and every breach of these regulations. The Immigration Agent in Brisbane is further bound to see that, on arrival, all the men fully understand their agreements, and sign them in his presence for depositing in the hands of Government; that they come of their own free will, and that they are able and willing to work for three years at 6*l.* per year; the Government guaranteeing them a free passage back to their own islands at the expiration of that time, and exacting from the employers a quarterly payment of fifteen shillings per coolie to accumulate during their time of service for return passage-money.

I found myself, then, at Brisbane in May 1870, with a schooner of 130 tons which had been passed by the Government as provided with all requisite accommodation, and proceeded to lay in a goodly supply of axes, adzes, tomahawks, knives, muskets, powder, bullets, blue and red calico, dozens of boxes of Bryant and May's safety matches, pipes, tobacco, red-lead, beads, and fish-hooks—all these articles

being included under the generic name of 'trade,' and standing as a circulating medium in the place of money, which latter is of course totally valueless in the New Hebrides. I remember a Tanna chief, who had heard of English money, once asking me for some, and on being shown both gold and silver, instantly chose the latter, preferring a new bright shilling to hang in his ear to an old sovereign. All these articles have, in trade with the natives, their separate and distinct value; for instance, they will only sell a pig for an axe or an adze, no amount of tobacco would purchase one. They will exchange their arms—as spears, clubs, or poisoned arrows—for knives or muskets, powder and ball, and other little things such as pipes. Bryant and May's matches, figs of tobacco, &c., are only good for purchasing yams, cocoa-nuts, tara, or bananas.

The trade, too, varies so much on the different islands. that it is impossible to say what may strike the fancy of the natives; and it is never safe for you to be without what he wants, as in most places the mere fact of having to do without some longed-for article would be quite enough to make an islander fire his musket at you, regardless of consequences.

Once as we shoved off from the lee-side of Tanna, with our boats loaded to the water's edge with yams

and pigs, a savage suddenly appeared on the beach with a little pig in one hand and his musket in the other, and shouted frantically to us to come back ; and on my being rude enough to tell him to eat his pig himself, he immediately dropped it, and, taking careful aim, to my astonishment let drive among us. Fortunately a Tanna man is about the worst shot in the world, so no harm was done, but this little incident showed me that these gentlemen of nature's own making do not understand chaff.

Innumerable little superstitions, too, keep constantly cropping up during the progress of every bargain ; of these tobacco, which is sold in the American form of figs, is a fruitful source. Ten cocoa-nuts, when I was there, were worth about one fig of tobacco, but the native will only sell one at a time, and if you break the fig, you must take care that he gets all the different portions himself, as he firmly believes that anyone else getting part of the same fig can exercise a power of witchcraft over him.

Just about this time the three years' agreements of about thirty Kanakas expired, and as they took their passages by my vessel I went to see their wages paid at the immigration office. The Act directs that this shall be done in coin of the realm, 18*l.* for the three years, and accordingly each man received his

handful of yellow sovereigns, at which they stared with an amusing look of helplessness. I went round the town with them to see that they got their money's worth, and I need scarcely say that these islanders were objects of the utmost interest to many store-keepers who had axes or muskets in stock. A Government agent from the immigration office is very wisely always sent round with coolies under these circumstances, as the men have confidence in him, and his character is a guarantee for fair dealing.

A very short time served to remove the diffidence of my new friends, who soon found out that money is power, and could scarcely be restrained from spending all their hard-earned cash in one shop. And a most miscellaneous assortment of goods they managed to secure! First, every man must have a chest, and one of the party having bought a cedar chest, the rest discovered that they must each have a cedar chest too. Next, most of them put inside a tolerable sized grindstone as a sort of ballast, with perhaps a camp-oven or a fish-kettle to keep the balance true, which little articles made the baggage transport through the streets a serious matter, until we chartered a few two-wheeled Melbourne cars for the day, and drove about, filling up the chests with Crimean shirts, handkerchiefs, jews' harps, pounds

of beads, gunpowder, &c., much to the amusement of the worthy Brisbanites ; and I had for many days after good reason for cursing those same chests, as the owners kept up a constant state of disturbance, never being able to decide, when their money was running short, what desirable article they would purchase next, and, when at sea, always fetching their whole property on deck every morning and bartering among themselves, both sides being always dissatisfied with the result, and insisting on bringing me into the squabble as arbitrator. Of course such two inflammatory things as a native and his gunpowder must be always kept separate, and all arms were stowed carefully away in my private store till we should arrive at the Islands, the fortunate possessors being allowed to feast their eyes on them every morning through the doorway, any intrusion into that sanctum being always stopped at once with a stern, 'S'pose you stop outside, very good, my boy !'

Finally, however, not seeing any other way of getting rid of their last pound or two, and not appreciating the good old Australian custom which their betters have of drinking it, they invested in a silk umbrella each, and held them gleefully over their heads, rain or no rain. By this time I fancy most

of these umbrellas are contributing to save the complexion of their respective chiefs, who are generally seen, at least in the Northern Islands, carrying a broad leaf over their heads—their only insignia of office.

CHAPTER III.

Black Rowing—Weigh Anchor in Brisbane River—First Sight of the Loyalty Islands—Missionary Work—I am taken in Charge—I Fraternise with the Authorities—French Leave—System of Military Colonisation.

LOVERS of the picturesque would, I think, have experienced a new sensation could they have been present at the start of these, the first Kanakas who were returning to their islands. I had hired some half-dozen natives who had served their time in Brisbane, or had been on board of whalers, intending to use them as interpreters on the different islands, and to help to man two whale-boats, pulling four oars each, which I had fitted with masts and sails, and triced up to the davits. And capital oars these men proved. Islanders seem to have a natural gift for pulling; they have a long sweeping stroke, and pull with a dash and vigour that would warm the heart of a Thames waterman, reaching well forward and picking up their stroke from the start. They have, however, rather the Chinese style of rowing, a side wrench

as they feather, which looks awkward at first, but I think the four natives I had in my boat would have showed creditably in any Thames regatta, and in the fearful heat of a South Sea calm would have rather astonished a few very good English amateurs.

Our vessel, dressed up with the gay flags of the new code, the group of merry friends who had come to see us off, the red woollen caps of my boats' crews, and the villainous countenances of most of the natives who paraded the deck, all gave more the effect of a filibustering expedition than the start of a trading voyage as we hove our anchor up in the Brisbane river, and dropped slowly down with the tide mid the cheers and chaff of the lookers-on. The captain, mate, four sailors, cook, trading-master, and myself made up our little party of nine white men, and I was glad to find that the first-mentioned had been on a similar voyage before, as his valuable advice was of great service to me, and he had a cheery, off-hand sort of way in dealing with the blacks which always kept them in good humour.

As nothing of consequence happened on the voyage—which, on the part of the Kanakas, was principally spent in making as many different toilettes in the day as a lady at the sea-side—I shall pass over the contents of my journal till we sighted the French

island of Maré and a new world suddenly opened its wonders before me. It was a high and rocky island, with pines growing down to the water's edge, and the smoke of the natives' fires rose to attract our notice from every part of the beach. As we had on board three men for this island, I was for running right in at once, but it was thought wiser to send a note on shore to the missionary, asking if it was safe.

In the meantime, from every little passage in the reef, canoes had put off, bringing coral, fowls, eggs, and yams, and the deck was covered with natives asking eager questions about everybody and everything. These natives were by far the most civilised I saw in the course of my cruise. The French priests had long been on the island, and it was at that moment occupied by a detachment of soldiers. The natives had no arms, and were evidently in a state of the most abject subjection to the French.

The captain, astride on the foreyard, kept a bright look-out for the passage in the reef, and the light breeze favouring us, we managed to get on to the anchorage, our keel just grazing a fragment of coral as we turned sharp round, and dropped anchor (in twelve fathoms of clear transparent water) before the mission station.

Mr. M——, the missionary, who, with his wife, was allowed to live here, sent us a civil message and received us kindly in his own house, where I had an opportunity of seeing some of the fruits of his work amongst the natives. A decent-looking house had been built for him, and one for the school, and here I heard the native children reading the Bible very fluently in their own tongue. A printing-press had also been set up, and copies of the book of Genesis were being quickly turned out by a few native boys and girls. Mr. M—— informed me that he sold each copy to the natives for a pound of cotton.

The men were all decently dressed in shirts and waist-cloths, the women in long loose gowns of blue calico; and, wonder of wonders, Mr. M—— had a real live pony, which fed about in front of the house, and evidently lived in clover on maize and bananas.

On going down to our boat we found the beach literally covered with natives of all ages and sexes, each with a pile of yams, gesticulating and talking at the pitch of his or her voice; and in the midst of them two dirty little soldiers, in straw hats and without shoes, but each armed with a chassepot rifle and cartridge pouch. They stood ominously between us and our boat, and as we approached, came forward with fixed bayonets, and in a guttural tone

told us a long story in a language which, as far as I was concerned, might have been Hebrew or Chinese. Now I had had a fair French education in my youth, had studied at Paris, and was in the constant habit of reading the sentimental works of Michelet and Edmond About when I could get them, and so thought no small things of my powers in that line, and had always boasted to my party, that if we met any Frenchman I could tackle him in his own tongue; and the blank look that came over the captain's face when he saw that I did not understand a word, warned me that for my own credit I must risk something.

The soldiers, I found, were from the Island of Bourbon, which may perhaps account for their language, and had been sent down by the commandant with full authority to seize our vessel, persons, and property, and keep possession of the same, till such time as we should have satisfied that gentleman, first, as to why we had not saluted his flag; secondly, as to how we came there at all, contrary to the regulations of his government; and lastly, how much tobacco and spirits we had on board, and whether we would sell them quietly at French prices, or have them requisitioned for the

use of the French nation as represented by M. le Commandant.

There was nothing for it but to obey a summons issued in so solemn a manner, and go up to the Commandant's in person to answer all these grave charges. And here a new difficulty arose. The head-quarters of this army of fourteen men and a sous-lieutenant was six miles off; and as for walking all that distance in the heat of a tropical sun, it was not to be thought of. Matters looked grave, and we were seriously consulting in English as to the propriety of making a rush at our two little friends and taking them, chassepots and all, over to the New Hebrides with us, when the missionary appeared, and volunteered the loan of his fat pony. Seated in triumph on this beast I proceeded, with my legs hanging down to the ground and altogether guiltless of stirrups, to scramble through the jungle that covers this island, now threading my way through native villages lying among cocoa-nut trees, now emerging suddenly on the coral beach, and startling groups of girls getting shellfish among the rocks, or bathing in the deep pools beside the path.

M. le Commandant, as he styled himself, received me civilly, and ushered me into his domain, consisting of three little mud huts and one banana tree,

on perhaps the hottest spot of the whole island. 'This,' he said, 'is my house,' pointing to the biggest one; 'that other is the guardhouse, where at present, I regret to say, six men and the sergeant (the only man who speaks English) are confined for drunkenness; and this,' he added, pointing to the smallest and dirtiest, 'will be monsieur's quarters till I receive word from my government how to deal with him.'

Here was a scrape! It seems I had broken through regulations published in the Sydney newspapers forbidding the trading of any vessels to the Loyalty Islands. A month before my arrival another Queensland vessel had run into the same island, and the master, who had a few returning natives on board, was fined so much per head, and the natives themselves marched up to the station, and their goods quietly distributed amongst those who had remained behind, while the returning prodigals did penance for the sin of having left their native islands three years before, in a few days' handcuffs, or, as they pithily called it, 'were made fast.' This is a short-sighted policy on the part of the possessors of the island, as Queensland is the only place where the natives have a chance of raising themselves a little in the scale of civilisation. My new acquaint-

ance read me four pages of closely written foolscap, which meant, to put it concisely, 'Keep the first vessel you can catch.' 'Monsieur,' I replied in the best French I could muster, 'since I am to be a guest of your great nation, allow me to send down to the ship to fetch some of the rum of Queensland which I happen to have, and which you have probably never tasted, and over this we will discuss the matter.'

How we discussed the matter and the rum; how at last, on hearing I had been in Paris, the lieutenant, overcome by his feelings, burst into a flood of maudlin tears, and swore I was his brother; how at the announcement I wept in his arms, and how in about half an hour I crept out, leaving my friend to give orders, as he said, about my bed being got ready, and, finding the fat pony still tied up in the sun, made use of my early lessons in Australian bush-riding to get that animal along over the rough path, may be left to my reader's imagination. I need scarcely say that I did not sleep that night in French quarters, and that I carried nothing away with me but the French leave I took.

Now that I think seriously over the whole matter, it seems to me that I had rather a narrow escape. The orders were strict, there were two war steamers

close by to enforce obedience, and we had unwittingly run our heads into about the nastiest trap it has ever been my bad fortune to encounter. At all events, the respect I have for France and her representatives has prevented my showing myself in that port again.

After landing another native at one of these islands, we were only too glad to find ourselves bowling along towards Tanna with a stiff north-west breeze, probably before the Commandant had awakened to the consciousness of the fact that light claret is scarcely good training for new Queensland rum.

Not having been in New Caledonia, or seen the working of the system of French colonization at Noumea, the head-quarters of all the troops stationed in the Loyalty Islands, I have scarcely a right to speak of it, and anything I know of their method of government is from the mouths of the natives themselves, and is, therefore, perhaps hardly an unprejudiced account.

The old story in history of two nations squabbling among themselves and calling in a foreign power to help and gradually disarm both sides seems to be frequently repeated in these islands. On Maré, the partially civilised tribe was attacked by the Wonifeelyahs (outer barbarians), who inhabited the



FRENCH LEAF.

north-east part of the island, but had defeated their enemies with great slaughter. Unfortunately the French stationed in Noumea heard rumours of wars going on in an island which, by a pleasant fiction, was supposed to be under French protection, and, seizing the opportunity, appeared as arbitrators on the scene.

The settlement of the dispute, I need scarcely say, was speedy; indeed, the matter was very simple. When I was at school I remember having a bloody and ferocious combat with another boy of about my own age, in which I am bound to say, in case this should happen to meet his eye, I got decidedly the worst of it, when lo! a mediator in the shape of the head-master, who, having listened to both sides of the story, very impartially thrashed us both, and, for the further improvement of the occasion, administered a very fair caning to the bystanders, ‘pour encourager les autres,’ as the French master told us afterwards. After all, the Commandant was quite justified in thinking that nations who, in the nineteenth century, could disgrace themselves by going to war on the frivolous pretext of some pretended aggression of the other side, did not deserve to govern themselves, but should be treated like children under the English system of compulsory

education, especially as he had the advantage of being both school board and inspector in his own person.

So this is what he did. He put everyone he could catch into handcuffs at night (by the way, my informant could not tell me how he happened to have, at this precise juncture, so many of these useful articles by him), and set them to work in the daytime to build him a house and barracks for his soldiers, as he was graciously pleased to inform them that he had come to stay, and that in fact he had brought his things with him. The house and barracks have been finished long ago, but, alas! for the natives, the roads are still in progress, and if we are to judge from the architecture of the house, will scarcely do credit to the sudden stride in civilization the Maré men are supposed to have made. To do the French justice, however, I must say that they have at least maintained discipline in their new possessions, and that going to war with his neighbour is for the native a dream of the past, partly because such proceedings do not chime in with French ideas, but chiefly because they have been left no arms to fight with. Perhaps the Maré men would get on better if they understood French, but as the English missionaries have been beforehand, it is a little hard

to expect a savage to speak three languages ; and I actually had to interpret between a soldier and a native, the former telling me what he wanted in French, while I, in broken English, adapted it to the comprehension of the latter.

When I look at these beautiful Loyalty Islands, occupied by really the highest type of coloured men I have seen, blessed with a glorious climate and fair soil, I cannot help thinking of what they might have been under English rule. Where only a dense jungle spreads over the whole island, English enterprise would have had thousands of acres of cotton ; harbours would have been made ; and where my little craft was looked upon as a curiosity, and forbidden to stop for a single day, a whole fleet of trading vessels would have been peacefully lying at anchor. The only bright spot in the whole arrangement was that little settlement where Mr. M——, the missionary, notwithstanding the hostility of the French priests, had collected a few scholars around him out of the large and degraded population of the island.



API MAN.

CHAPTER IV.

Island on Tanna—Military Tactics—Hair-dressing—Tattooing.

I WISH I had been an artist to paint the glorious scene that rose before me on the morning of my arrival at Tanna—the long swell breaking heavily on the sunken coral-reef, the glassy water beyond, then the cocoa palms down to the water's edge, the steep rocks matted with such verdure as perhaps

only Tanna produces, and in the distance the light cloud of smoke hanging over the sulphur volcano that crowns this island, catching the rays of the morning sun and standing out against the sky like a mountain of gold.

I think I never appreciated the lines—

Where every prospect pleases,
And only man is vile,

till I landed there, for a viler looking lot it has never been my ill-fortune to behold. The shore was literally black with the lordly savage, every man with a musket over his shoulder, and every man daubed to the eyes with vermilion. It was with great satisfaction that I made out that the display merely meant that the gentlemen had had their breakfast and were going out to fight their next neighbours (a tribe headed by a warrior named 'Washerwoman,' certainly not from his habits or his linen), in which little employment they regularly spent their days, coming back in the afternoon, happy and hungry, in much the same way as we should come in from shooting in England to afternoon tea in the drawing-room. I must say, however, to give them their due, they very seldom hurt any one, an islander's military tactics generally consisting in walking along with his musket at full

cock, performing at the same time on an instrument resembling Pandæan pipes hung round his neck ; and if, during his martial progress, he happened to see anybody or anything, or thought he did, he would let fly forthwith, and, without waiting to see if he had bagged anything, would scamper back to his own bit of beach, where, after a long harangue to the women, he would reload his weapon and repeat the dose. In this style of fighting the great advantage is that you are always pretty sure, judging from your own experience, that your adversary's musket won't go off.

I must say, however, that I was a little startled at the clamorous rush of the Tanna men when our boat shot the passage in the reef, and turning round, backed stern first up the narrow cove till we came close to the shore, when, casting our stone anchor overboard, we rode gently on the swell which alternately drove us nearly high and dry upon the beach, or, suddenly washing back, pulled us twenty or thirty yards at a bound from the shore.

A grinning crowd of stark-naked men painted as I have described, and shouting out their customary salutation of 'Good night ! good night ! vagaree !' which in some extraordinary way has got twisted into meaning, 'How are you, stranger ?' is a little

alarming to a novice ; and I could not help thinking how completely in the power of these same grinning rascals we were, as they seized on the boat and held on to it by main force, a dozen of them barely sufficing to keep it still in the heavy back wash. But if they were strong, they were at all events merciful and very friendly. If I shook one black paw that morning I shook three hundred ; indeed, it only wanted the presence of the newspaper reporters to remind one of the reception of Mr. Martin Chuzzlewit before he started on his trip to the new City of Eden in the United States.

The natives of each island have a method of hair-dressing peculiar to themselves ; and as I shall in these sketches have but little to say with regard to costume (as we understand the word), the natives following generally the fashion of our first parents, I shall here describe the various styles of coiffure in all the islands I have visited, premising that if London hair-dressers find anything new or suggestive, they are perfectly at liberty to make use of the idea, as it is not copyright. A Tanna boy, from his earliest infancy, has his hair dressed in the following manner. Some half-dozen hairs are gathered up together and bound round with soft grass, leaving enough of the ends to frizzle out, till all the head has been served

the same way; the ends are then rubbed with chunam, or quick-lime, which soon takes out the black colour; I have seen very young boys with their hair a bright red, flowing down to the waist, and really forming a 'waterfall' that many ladies would give gold to buy. This sort of thing is all very well at that age; but a 'gray barbarian,' with a few straggling spikes of hair dressed in this style, always made me laugh, which perhaps only further cemented the feeling of good fellowship already existing between us.

Most of the women of all savage races wear their hair shorter than their husbands, and the Tanna woman's 'kinky curls' hang round her face like those of a negress, partially covered by a banana leaf, which latter addition seems to be *de rigueur* amongst the older ones. On Sandwich or Vaté the man has his hair matted, and flattened down to his head, and always fixes two semicircular hog's tusks to the love-locks hanging before his ears; and a chief of that island, who condescended to come with me for part of the trip as one of my boat's crew, used actually to wear a queue, but weighted with a shell instead of the ribbon bow of our grandfathers; and though I offered him a considerable sum in exchange, he would not part with it. Their women, however,

shave their heads clean, and, sun or no sun, wear no covering, but rub themselves over head and all with yellow turmeric or ochre. The effect is not pleasing.

I have said that in Maré the native approaches nearer to civilisation than any other I have seen ; and this is particularly borne out by the women, who wear their hair long and parted in the middle, and try, vainly it is true, to make it lie down neatly, under the slightly erroneous idea that smooth hair is the fashion at present prevailing among their white sisters !

The men of Tonga, on the other hand, wear a chignon, which is puffed over a cushion *à la règle*, and kept steady in front by a piece of string, and their girlish faces are quite in keeping. Their women I have never seen. On Api they build their hair up on end as high as possible, decolorizing one side with lime and leaving the other black ; but as I have only been on very distant terms with this treacherous tribe, I cannot claim any acquaintance with their women, who, I believe, shave clean. But the coiffure of the inhabitants of Vauna Lava is perhaps the most extraordinary of all, reminding me always of the quaint designs that used to be cut out of privet hedges in old-fashioned gardens. A sort of

curved helmet is shaped with the knife out of the solid mass of hair, and rises in semicircular form on each side of the head. This tribe, the most docile



MARÉ GIRL.

and friendly of any I have seen, is also the only one which seems to have any knowledge of tattooing, and

all its members bear on their cheek a star quaintly executed with a sharp fish-bone. Here, again, the women are doomed to sober fashions, and wear their hair *au naturel*, which is, perhaps, the reason of their appearing sometimes remarkably pretty.



GOING TO MARKET.

CHAPTER V.

Tanna Pigs—Trading—Canvassing a Chief—Return Men—
Intending Emigrants.

BUT to return to my reception. My trade box—an old deal case with a hinged cover, previously filled from the ship with tobacco, pipes, red calico, and blue beads, as these, with adzes, are the best articles for the Tanna trade—was produced. And now signs of native produce suddenly appeared. The women, who, with the pigs and yams, had been hid in the bushes till the men could ascertain our friendly

intentions, trooped forth in hundreds, and far from showing any fear, besieged the boat with their shrill cries for beads, while the fat little children larked about in the water, and as they were not tall enough to hold on to the side of the boat, every long roll of the swell caught them unawares and washed them high and dry on the shingly beach, to be incontinently seized by their mothers and chastised with loud vociferation. I have often wondered at the imperfect idea of number which a native possesses. He grasps easily enough the idea of one pig for one axe, but three pigs for three axes bothers him. We found no difficulty in getting as many pigs as we liked for an adze apiece, but they were by no means in fine condition; and if it be true that these are the descendants of pigs left by Captain Cook in the last century, they must have wonderfully altered, or else the English breed at that time must have been very different from what it is now. They are shaped like the West Indian peccary, black and hairy, long in the leg, and hollow in every part where they should be full, and the only point in which they excel is in biting. I had on a pair of thick blue serge trousers, which seemed to strike the fancy of one of these beasts as something novel, and no sooner had he been put into the boat than he made

a dart at them, and, as he would not let go, I was obliged to let him have nearly all one leg to satisfy him.

To do the island pig justice, however, I must say that their flesh is firm, white, and well flavoured, and when fattened up on cocoa-nuts is to my taste infinitely superior to any English pork I ever tasted. During the whole cruise I lived on no other meat than pork—roasted, boiled, and fried—save an occasional junk of ship's beef, and have ever since had a high opinion of Kanaka pork. The tribes living inland generally supplied these pigs, and used to bring the unhappy brutes down for miles with their legs tied together slung on a pole, two men to a pig, paying toll on their way to every tribe through whose territory they passed, which considerably took the gilt off their profits. In my subsequent dealings with the tribes living on the beach, I used to impress upon them that as I had come there for their benefit, not for my own, the produce intended for me ought to pass free, but they showed so marked a dislike to establishing this precedent that I was obliged to waive that point. Pigs were of course taken on board alive, and being given their liberty, used to run about the decks, squeaking and quarrelling amongst themselves, and

every now and then having a stand-up fight like two bulldogs. During one part of the cruise I had nearly a hundred pigs on board at a time, as the coolies used to consume at least three per diem, and I generally went armed with a stout club to save my legs while walking about the deck; as, though they took no notice of the islanders, they evidently looked upon a white man as an enemy. The surplus pigs we had were, on our return to Brisbane, eagerly bought up there by the butchers, and I have no doubt that some of their descendants have already acquired considerable colonial experience in Queensland.

A native on the look out for a bargain is a curious study of human nature. He places all his merchandise together in one heap, and then, singling out the smallest yam from the lot, brings that forward and offers it for anything it will fetch; and, if the price realised suits his book, produces another, and so on. This, of course, makes trading with the islanders rather tedious, and a matter requiring considerable experience. In old days, before so many vessels went down to the New Hebrides, the crews of the sandal-wood traders used to make a large profit out of their empty bottles.

Natives are so fond of shaving, that anything

having a sharp edge, such as a bit of broken glass, is of great value; and a man with half-a-dozen bottles and a heavy stone could in those days earn as much money out of them as he liked, getting a nautilus shell for every piece. I think, however, that these shells must have got very rare lately, as I scarcely ever saw one during my cruise.

The constant state of internal warfare in which they live, makes powder and ball necessities of life; and as they have an idea that a white man can do anything, they used, after they found they could trust me, to bring all their broken muskets to be mended, or have new nipples put in. Sometimes they will take a fancy to some sort of trade which you have not got with you, and altogether it requires to be a very fair salesman to dispose of the contents of the trade box.

But now to the main object of my cruise—that of recruiting labourers for the plantations. I determined first of all to gain over the chiefs by impressing on them the advantages the men would gain in going with me, and the accession of strength they would be to their several tribes when they returned from Queensland, bringing their muskets and powder with them. An old and shrewd-looking man, whom I at once singled out for my purpose, listened attentively

to my harangue and smiled graciously enough, manifesting a sudden fancy for my own private sheath-knife, which being in a moment of weakness given to him, he walked off, leaving me to a crowd of excited applicants, who had seen the transaction, for more sheath-knives of the same sort; and I was not a little disgusted on finding that he had not understood a single word of all my eloquence, being of a different tribe to my interpreter; and so I learnt a lesson I have never forgotten about indiscriminate charity, which many people besides myself might profitably take to heart.

I found the hearts of all the men hardened against the idea of emigration to Queensland, so long a time had elapsed since they had seen their countrymen who had gone before. They said, if you will bring back our brothers we will go and work for you, but until then not a man shall leave the island.

Now, in canvassing an election, there is an old and trite saying that 'the woman once gained, the man follows,' and as there were plenty of them standing round, I singled out a matronly-looking female with a ring in her nose and a child on her shoulder, and tried to make friends, inwardly hoping that she would not expect me to kiss the baby, as I hear candidates for Parliament have to do, on which,

drawing her grass petticoat fringe close round her, she sat up such a piteous howling that it was clear that the tide of advancing civilisation had not as yet wafted the doctrine of woman's rights so far, and that far from having any influence over her husband, she actually seemed afraid of him !

They little knew that at that moment some of the identical men they had been asking for were on board the schooner ; and great was the astonishment and delight when our two whale-boats appeared, bringing a load of happy-looking fellows in gaudy-coloured shirts, who, too impatient to wait till we had beached the boat, jumped up to their waists into the water and began tugging out their chests, which, as they carried them through the breakers, got so filled with sea water, that the shirts, muskets, and silk umbrellas must have suffered severely in consequence. The centre of an admiring crowd, we overhauled the chests of these, the first men who had ever returned to Tanna, and every article, from a fish-hook to a grindstone, as it was pulled out and its use explained, was hailed with shrill cries of delight. The grindstones struck their fancy especially, and when the bran new double-barrelled guns were produced, the eagerness which the chiefs displayed to have a look at them boded ill for their

present possessors on an island where the only security to property lies in—

‘The simple rule, the good old plan,
That they shall take who have the power,
And they shall keep who can.’

It was then that I appreciated in what danger we should have been had these coolies had any reason to complain of their treatment in Queensland. Fortunately they had all served under good masters, and were satisfied that they had received the amount of wages they had bargained for; otherwise I am quite sure that, as Artemus Ward puts it, the head chief would have ordered a feast for that afternoon, and ‘the corpse would have been ready!’

Instead of this, however, they all seemed very grateful to us for bringing back their men, and several relations of the new comers brought me presents of pigs and fruit as an offering of good-will for such a fulfilment of contract. The opportunity was too good to be thrown away, and I saw by the faces round me that now was the time to strike the iron while it was hot; so, shutting up the chests, my interpreter, standing in the centre of a ring of squatting natives, explained that these things were the wages earned by three years’ service in Queensland (thirty-nine moons he called it); that there was plenty

of provisions on board of the schooner, that my tobacco was the best he had tasted, and I myself a first-rate fellow, one of the right sort. That afternoon a good many of the young men joined me; and as soon as their intention to leave the island was known, there was a general rush of all the women to stop them. Some, indeed, yielded to female influence, but most of them, indignant at being treated as children, and perhaps afraid of being laughed at by the boat's crew, insisted on getting into the boat—generally, however, paying a last tribute to nature by sitting down in a circle and howling melodiously for a little bit, after which the tears, which every savage can call so readily to his eyes, would vanish, and the sun of cheerfulness come out as he stepped briskly into the boat like a child let loose from school, and, far from wishing to bring the women with him, seemed to have forgotten all about them before he went on board; and the sight of the beloved tobacco and clay pipes, with some of which they were always immediately supplied, quite obliterated all traces of home sickness.



A FATHERLY INTEREST.

CHAPTER VI.

Signing Agreements—Slop Clothes—Feeding-time—Lost Tribes of Israel — Erromango—Trowsers—Diving—Turtles.

THE Polynesian Labourers' Act of 1868 requires that all agreements shall be signed by the coolies and the recruiting agent, and endorsed by the master of the vessel, in the presence of some consul, missionary, or European resident, before they leave the island, but this is one of the regulations which it is very difficult to enforce, for the simple reason that on very few of

the islands are there missionaries or white residents, and on none as yet is there any such thing as a consul. On Tanna, however, as it happened, there was a white man, and when he had come on board the business of signing the agreements began. The chiefs of the tribe had also come, and they took a sort of fatherly interest in the matter. One after the other our new recruits came down to the cabin and gazed about them with astonishment at probably the first tables and chairs they had ever seen, while the chiefs made themselves at home ; and one of them, acting on the *nil admirari* principle, in trying to show that he knew the use of a fork, ran about half an inch of cold steel into his great blubber lip, and dropped it with a very rueful countenance. The form of agreement having been translated to the men, each came forward readily to affix his mark, and evidently attached great importance to the ceremony, which they called 'making paper,' and when we reached Brisbane instantly recognised their marks on the agreements.

Another provision of the Act requires that the men shall be provided with shirts, trousers, and blankets, and having got these out of the stores we proceeded to try them on. Now these clothes had all been bought wholesale in Sydney, and were of

course all of different sizes, numbered from three to seven, after the manner of slop-made goods. It was a source of great amusement to see the face of delight with which a little boy would array himself in No. 7 trousers, which were longer than his whole body, and proceed to walk across the deck, while a huge savage in a pair of No. 3, scarcely reaching to his knees, and not buttoning round his waist, turned himself round and round for the admiration of his brethren; and I saw at once the reason why so many English soldiers look uncomfortable in their clothes—they have been made by contract. Even after we had suited them all, it was as much as I could do to prevent them cutting off all the buttons to hang as ornaments round their necks, and it was long before they could moderate their martial stride to suit their new clothing.

I may as well describe here how they were fed, and so get rid of the subject. As soon as it was light, Sam the cook used to light the fires under the huge pots on deck, and would then have the morning supply of rice and pork or yams served out to him. Four buckets of rice, thirteen of fresh water, and a pig, would, on our return voyage, about do for breakfast. As soon as this was cooked, every man took his tin plate to the copper for his share, and it

required a good deal of sharpness on the part of the cook to see that all got fairly treated, as they soon got knowing enough to duck round behind the others, reappearing instantly with a clean plate and grave face, a black 'Oliver asking for more.' This diet of rice and fresh pork, however, was so much richer than anything they had been accustomed to at home, that I very soon had a host of sick men on board, and had to put them for a week at a time on yams and cocoa-nuts again, which always chased away every symptom of illness. I found the only way was to let them cook as much and as often as they liked, and I never interfered with them in any way if I could possibly help it; unless, indeed, as sometimes happened, one native would fancy that some stranger had looked cross at him, in which case, though without arms, they would all take sides, and if not prevented by a speedy exhibition of authority, would have made a sort of Donnybrook Fair of the ship's decks.

I cannot leave the island of Tanna without indulging in a few speculations as to the origin of this remarkable tribe, and the place they came from. I have heard many cogent reasons given in support of the opinion that they are the descendants of some canoe-load of Maories, who had been blown

away from New Zealand. The principal evidence brought forward for this theory is the remarkable similarity in the two languages, they being indeed in some words identical. A tree very much resembling the bread-fruit tree of New Zealand, but bearing no fruit, is called by a name signifying the Tree of Disappointment in the Maori tongue ; and the supporters of the 'lost Maori' doctrine argue, that on the landing of this boatload of hungry men this was the first tree they saw, and supposing it to be the bread-fruit, they had run towards it only to be disappointed. They are on the whole, too, a large-limbed, powerful, and warlike race, just as the Maories are ; but, strange to say, they have not got the custom of tattooing themselves which might be expected from such an origin, and I think this is one of the customs which would never have died out. It was gravely told me not long ago that these must be a part of the lost tribes of Israel, but the only argument which my informant could produce was that they had hooked noses and generally a Jewish physiognomy. Mr. Wilson, however, in his book on 'Our Israelitish Origin,' seems to think that the children of Israel, properly so-called, had by no means what we should now-a-days consider a Jewish caste of feature ; and at all events the remarkable fondness

of the Tanna man for pork, and the skill with which he breeds that forbidden animal, is, I think, also an argument for the other side.

Finding ourselves unable to get any more men at this place, we proceeded slowly northwards, trying every little spot along the shore where we saw, from the smoke of the natives' fires, that a tribe was settled; but the tribes in Tanna are so small and divided, and live in such a state of deadly enmity with each other, that, as we had not with us any more return passengers for that island, they would have nothing to say to us except in the way of bartering pigs. We did not venture to leave the boat on these occasions, but anchored it where the water was breast high, so as to guard against treachery, and only one boat at a time dared go in, the other boat's crew lying by on their oars at a little distance ready to pull in to our help in case of a row.

Leaving Tanna, we made for the island of Erromango, where Mr. Williams and Mr. Harris were massacred in 1839. An English missionary is settled in Dillon's Bay at the present time on the same spot where these two gentlemen died, but I believe he does not make much progress among the islanders, who have earned the character of being the most

ferocious of any in these seas. I had one native to land here, and accordingly started in with the two boats, taking him with me; but there was such a heavy sea running, and the passages in the reef were so small, that, when about 200 yards off the land, we had to lie on our oars. 'Trouser,' the boy I have mentioned, said he would swim ashore, and accordingly, accoutred as he was, he plunged in; and his chest, fortunately a light one and pretty seaworthy, having been lowered over the side to him, he started gallantly for the shore, pushing it before him. The beach was covered with natives, some, like the Tanna men, armed with muskets, and some carrying bows, who received him as he landed with loud cries. In about a quarter of an hour a black head bobbing up and down in the surf showed where someone was swimming off to us; and the new-comer succeeded, after a tremendous struggle, in reaching the boat, the natives in the meantime, being evidently angry at his going, fired their muskets at him and at us, but we were out of shot, and their target practice was scarcely good enough to allow them to hit so small an object as a man's head in the surf. We pulled him into the boat, and made out, through my stroke-oar Pipe, an Erromango boy, that he belonged to one of the bush

tribes, and had been anxious for some time to leave the island, where, as he said, there was nothing to eat; so when he saw the schooner's boat coming in, he made a sudden dash for it through the surf. We instantly named him 'Trouser,' after his late countryman, which name he bears to the present day; and so good a boy did he turn out, that after two days on board, he was installed as cook's mate, and was soon chopping wood and washing tin plates and dishes in a way that pleased old Fritz the cook greatly, and cajoled him into giving 'Trouser' many a cup of hot coffee in the first watch.

The natives of all these islands are excellent swimmers, seeming to be quite as much at home in the water as on land, and showing very little fear of the innumerable sharks that abound in these waters. Lying at anchor one day in about four fathoms of water, and working at one of the boats hung on the davits, my gimlet, a very small one, slipped and fell overboard. Gimlets are scarce articles in the South Seas; and, much annoyed, I offered half-a-crown to any boy who would fetch it for me. In a minute the whole of the natives I had on board were over the side, had dived to the reef we were lying over, and were groping about amongst the coral branches; and in another minute

one of them had brought it to the surface in triumph, and seemed to think that if half-crowns were to be earned so easily as that in Queensland it must be a good place to go to. During the cruise I made a rule that after breakfast every morning all the men should jump overboard and have a swim, and generally took the opportunity of having one myself. We used to heave to, with the topsail aback, and enjoy ourselves in the water for about half an hour, having ropes hung over the sides as ladders to go up and down with ; but the constant fear I was in of a shark distinguishing me by my white skin, and singling me out from among so many black ones for his dinner, kept me pretty close to the ship's side.

Sometimes, too, while pulling wearily along under the hot sun in my whale-boat, the quick sight of the man stationed in the bow would make out a turtle asleep on the glassy water, and we would start in instant pursuit. Having got within about fifty yards of him, the oars were laid in, and my boat's crew getting over the side of the boat swam gently along with it, while I sculled with the steer oar. On getting close to him the boys would all noiselessly disappear under the water, and coming up quietly under the unsuspecting turtle, would try and seize

him by the legs on each side. The turtle, however, always got the better of us in all the hunts we had ; and amidst yells, splashing, and shots from my revolver, would vanish, leaving my crew with rueful countenances to be laughed at for the rest of the day.

CHAPTER VII.

Coral—Island of Vaté—Large Canoes—Solomon Islanders—Civilisation—Native Dance—Fiji Craft—Cotton-growing—Rangi—Missionary Schooner—Mary Tavontagisitawak—Leprosy—Currents—An Accident.

BUT I despair of conveying to my readers any idea of the strangeness of everything in those waters where 't is always afternoon ;' where a gentle trade wind just ripples the surface of the ocean ; where groups of islands, some looming dark green in the foreground, some fading away softly into the haze, cluster round the ship on every side ; where the only sound you hear above the monotonous splash of the oars, as you pull gently along, is when some whale rolls half his vast length out of the water, or the cry of the lonely diver as he hovers near you, sometimes only dipping his wing in the water, sometimes coming down like an arrow on his prey.

All these islands are of volcanic origin, and rise abruptly like fortresses from the sea ; and round their

base for thousands of years the coral insect, finding something to shelter him from the break of the water, has gone on piling atom on atom, till the branches of his submarine palace loom like a forest of trees through the clear water. The most beautiful coral (blue, green and red) that I saw was on the island of Api, where the reef extends nearly a mile from the shore, and, as you go over it in a boat, breaks into all sorts of fantastic shapes. As this coral was alive, it had to be boiled immediately on being broken off the reef, which preserved it indeed, but bleached it to a chalky white, and made it so brittle that very few fine pieces reached Queensland.

Leaving Erromango, we sailed over to Sandwich or Vaté, where there is a mission-station, bringing up in a little bay on the south-west side. We had several men to land here, but failed to get any recruits, as the missionaries objected to their going. Here, as the natives were very friendly, I went ashore and had long talks with several of the Vaté men who had been in whalers, and hired six of them to come and pull in one of my boats. One of these was the chief whom I have mentioned as wearing a queue. They made an excellent crew they are strong hardy men and pull well, only wanting a few words of chaff

and encouragement to keep them rowing all day in the heat of the sun.

Unfortunately, however, I had given each of them a little trade to start with, and they used to set their whole minds on a little private bargaining with the natives for themselves wherever we went, and considered themselves so much aggrieved if they did not get everything at their own prices that we nearly had several quarrels on our hands in consequence.

Here I first saw the larger-sized canoes of the South Sea Islands: they are cut generally out of one solid tree, being about a foot broad, and out-rigged like the Cingalese proa; the large sails are made of matting in a triangular shape, and though good for running are of very little use on a wind. As they are sharp at both ends, tacking becomes a simple matter, the man in the bow simply turning round and becoming *de facto* the man at the wheel. Sometimes these canoes are made so large that fifty or sixty men can crowd into them; but they are little used for fighting purposes, being chiefly kept for friendly visits to neighbouring islands, or for going off to ships. On these occasions the crew all kneel down, one behind the other, with short single-bladed paddles, and the chief stands in the centre by the mast and beats time with a long monotonous chaunt.

on a sort of drum. I have heard of three of these canoes pursuing a whale-boat for miles, but of course without a strong breeze they could not overtake it.

We reached the harbour of the north-west bay of Vaté in the dusk of the evening, and could just dimly discern a great number of small craft lying there, before the darkness (that closes in so suddenly in these latitudes) shut out everything from our view, and the dying away of the breeze left us becalmed in the shadow of the land at the mercy of a strong current, which was drifting us we knew not where. Calling up both crews, we lowered the boats and proceeded to tow the schooner against the current by a hawser, while I took my place in the leading boat with a torch and lead-line to look out for the navigation, and after four hours' weary pulling we got to the anchorage just as the moon rose over the land, and showed us the shoal of reefs we had come through, and by some miracle escaped.

These craft hailed from the Fiji Islands, and had come down to get labour for the cotton plantations there, and I soon saw what a good thing it was that the Queensland government made such strict regulations as to the fitting-up of their ships. Most of the Fiji crafts were little ketch or cutter-rigged boats, and the wretched natives had nothing else

to sleep on than the stone ballast that covered the bottom, and as far as I could see very little to eat. One of these had just returned so far on its way home from a cruise to the Solomon Islands, and was filled with a number of natives of both sexes. On going ashore, we found them all bathing in the fresh water stream which runs into the harbour, men and women together, and evidently delighted to get a drink of fresh water again. These natives, far from being black, were very nearly white, with long, straight and coarse black hair, and reminded me very much of the Chinese. They crowded round my captain and myself with great curiosity, and were evidently much struck by our fair complexions, and could scarcely take their eyes off R——, who was a fine-looking specimen of a Swede with red hair.

After all, *we* must appear even more astonishing to all black races when they first see us than they do to us. The idea of a man having civilised himself to such a state of perfection that he cannot go into the sunshine without an enormous plaited hat on his head, lest he should fall down dead of sunstroke; or walk twenty yards across a coral reef without his boots to save his life; or even take off his clothes in company from a sense of modesty, must be an incomprehensible puzzle to any man

who walks with the 'native majesty' of Adam, thinking no evil, and with no dragging trousers to confine his limbs, or blacked boots to pinch his feet ! I never shall forget the horror-struck start of a crowd of natives when I sat down upon the beach and deliberately proceeded to pull off my boots ; and how they examined them, and at last, gaining courage, pricked them with their spears to see if they were really part of my body and had feeling. It was like the scene in 'Gulliver's Travels,' when the Hounhymys carefully examine the shipwrecked traveller's clothes and wonder at his stupidity in never having learnt to do without them. On several occasions, after we got further north among the more (as we should call them) uncivilised tribes, a mob of women nearly tore the shirt off my back in their anxiety to see whether it was flesh and blood, and insisted on stroking my hands and face, and, last but not least, my red beard ; and I can now appreciate from experience what Garibaldi must have felt during his visit to this country, when every romantic young lady in England pestered him for a lock of his hair.

These Solomon Islanders were at last induced, by presents of tobacco, to leave off admiring us ; and, in gratitude for this unaccustomed luxury, they formed

a ring and struck up a lively dance, accompanying themselves in the Scotch fashion by whistles and shrieks, the women especially distinguishing themselves by the novelty of their ideas and the vigour of their gymnastics.

Poor things! they had very little to laugh about, as I soon found. The master came to me almost with tears in his eyes to tell me they had no food on board except cocoanuts, and I believe the bags of biscuits and rice I furnished him with must have saved many lives.

I think if the Fiji cotton-growers could have seen the state of things on board of some of their vessels, brought on by mismanagement, it would have given them a lesson to enquire into the character of their men before entrusting the care of so many lives to them; and the stories with which the papers have lately been so rife are doubtless owing in a great measure to these craft being sent down with very little trade to buy provisions with, and under the charge of such a bad class of men. The name of Fiji is held in abhorrence on most of the islands, and the discredit brought on this traffic might be very easily obviated by the appointment of an immigration agent in the Fijis, armed with full power to enforce his decrees, and carefully to

examine the vessels sent out ; and I am sure that all the planters there would in the end find the benefit of such an act, which would gradually restore the confidence of the coolies, and make emigration to the Fijis as much liked as it is to Queensland. What became of all these little vessels after I left the islands I never heard, but they were certainly very ill-prepared for a long beat to windward, homeward bound, of at least four hundred miles, against the strong trade-wind ; all I can say is, that I was very glad to part company with them, as their masters crowded our decks all day long, and drank and fought among themselves till the grog ran short. While my men filled our water-tanks and washed their clothes in the stream, I strolled along the shore to a spot where two white men have started a small cotton plantation. They had a few labourers from other islands, and were busily engaged in picking when I arrived. The great scarcity of labour, however, prevents their doing justice to the crop, which was lying strewn all over the ground. Cotton-growing here—though the island is blessed with a capital soil and climate, and above all with what we have not in Australia, certain rainy and dry seasons—is still in a very primitive state : the want of any ginning machinery, or even bales to pack it in,

obliges the planter to put it seeded as it comes from the pod into blankets, and to pack it in loosely with the spade. I am convinced, however, that before long all these islands will be great cotton plantations, as the land is so cheap to start with, and living so easy, that Englishmen must sooner or later be tempted over from Australia ; but I propose to enter more fully into this subject in a future chapter.

The Vaté islander generally goes armed with bow and arrows and club, but his favourite weapon is a tomahawk with a long carved handle, which he is very expert with, and which he has a nasty habit of flourishing round his head while he is talking, in a way embarrassing to a stranger. They do not let the art of war die out for want of practice, and as the tribes are much larger here, and use large canoes, their expeditions are formidable. Many years ago, a Malay, who had deserted from some whaler with the biggest boat he could lay his hands on, got driven on to Erromango, where, far from being ill treated, he seems to have been made a chief, and formed a regular harem of wives. Tiring, I suppose, of the monotony, he used to make a series of piratical excursions on his neighbours, and at last settled on Vaté, where he acquired territory and renown. In fact, if he had lived under more favour-

able circumstances some centuries earlier, he would have been just the man to found new colonies on the Spanish main to the glory of Queen Elizabeth. The son of this Viking is at present a smart waiter in a white tie, serving in a Brisbane hotel, who used always to talk proudly of his father as a man of property, till the Vaté men summoned courage to knock poor Rangî on the head and divide his effects amongst themselves by general consent.

We got away, to my great delight, from Havannah harbour at last, but as soon as we got outside found that instead of the usual gentle south-east trade-wind, it was blowing half a gale from the north, and we had to run, in company with the mission schooner 'Dayspring,' for shelter behind the island of Pelli. The 'Dayspring' had a missionary on board to land on this island, hitherto quite uninhabited by whites, and her decks were crowded with missionaries and their wives, who had come for the cruise from Sydney. We had a fair start together for a long beat to the anchorage, and the missionaries evidently regarded us with great suspicion, and wished to shake us off, while we determined not to be left behind, and kept tacking and tacking, in the stiff squall that heeled us right over on our beam ends, to get ahead. To do the reverend gentlemen justice, they worked

with a will to sustain the honour of their schooner, pulling and hauling like mad, and I could see that we had by no means lessened the jealousy with which they originally regarded us as we drew slowly ahead and at last fairly gave them the slip, leaving them to set all the rest of their staysails to try and over-haul us.

We got about twenty natives off the island, as we had two or three to land there, their well-filled chests being as usual immediate passports to friendliness. One of our new recruits, however, had apparently meanly tried to give his wife the slip, and his disgust was perfect when we brought her to him on board on our next trip—a tall, stately woman, who looked the last person to be put upon by anyone, much less by her own husband. We rigged her out in a shirt and petticoat made of a blanket, and she was delighted. In this little conjugal tiff I take great credit to myself for having been the mediator, as they turned out after a bit to be a most loving couple, nor was the insulted wife above sharing the cup of tea I always gave her (as a mark of respect to her as a woman) with her spouse. For all I know she may now be a decent cook in some household in Queensland, as I last saw her going off quite happy in a little coasting steamer, dressed in a blue print,

and seemingly still on good terms with Tavongtagi-sitawak, her husband.

Less fortunate was another very pretty girl, who tried to escape from her tribe and swim off to us. She appeared suddenly on the beach as we were pulling off, running as if possessed, and followed by her indignant husband and friends, and plunging into the surf, made for the boat; but she had miscalculated her strength, and her husband was too powerful a swimmer for her, for before she could get out of the breakers he had caught her up, and, dragging her ashore again by the hair of her head, proceeded on the spot to administer, contrary to all precedent in civilised life, a sound thrashing with a stick as a lesson for the future, to the vociferous delight of the bystanders.

The natives of all these more northern islands, and especially one called Aoba or Lepers' Island, are generally supposed to be subject to leprosy; but, though I have seen many Albinos and speckled men and women, I do not believe that the disease is really known here in its true form, as there is in the cases I have examined no appearance of decay in the flesh, or of the formation of scales. A rumour had gained ground that a white woman had for a long time been kept a prisoner, with her child, in the

Island of Vaté, and the chiefs produced her for my inspection ; but she turned out to be only an Albino, and I was delighted, for the honour of my countrywomen, that so hideous a creature could claim no kindred with them.

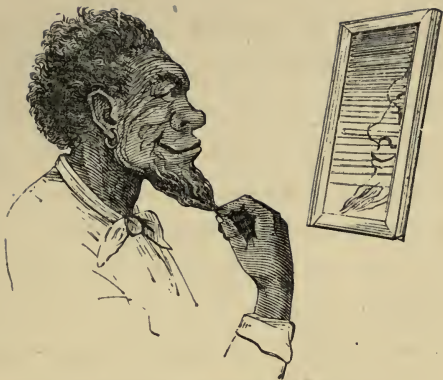
Leaving this island, we had three or four days of most unpleasant weather near Maï, sometimes scudding under a close reefed mainsail in a squall, sometimes becalmed and drifting helplessly about in the strong currents which are always running and always changing in these latitudes, and the boats' crews had many a long and [weary pull to tow the schooner past some black and shining rock whose nose was just visible ahead. The two great difficulties of the navigation of these waters are these currents and the want of an accurately laid down chart. The chart I possessed, and which I believe is the latest one yet published, was grossly incorrect in many places, and I regret that want of time and knowledge of surveying prevented my rectifying it. I think it would be well worth while, if so many vessels are to go down year after year to these islands, for the government to send down a regular surveying-ship to take accurate soundings and lay down the position of the reefs.

Some of the principal harbours of refuge in the hurricane season on Tanna and Sandwich have been

tolerably surveyed, but many of the islands themselves are placed in quite a wrong position on the map. During the whole of the hot season navigation nearly ceases in these latitudes, owing to the danger to which any such small vessels as usually congregate here in the winter would be exposed if caught in one of the awful hurricanes that generally once or twice in the year sweep across the islands; and it requires a great knowledge of the various anchorages to be able to find them, as the bottom mostly consists of coral reef, which either fouls the anchor or breaks away on the first strain, allowing the ship to drag ashore; and shipwreck here assumes a very grave aspect, when the sailor knows that, even if the sharks let him off, he will certainly form the *pièce de résistance* at a native feast the same night that he lands. On the whole, I do not wonder that insurance companies in Sydney charge so high a premium as ten per cent. for insuring vessels bound to these islands.

Our difficulties were further complicated by our foreyard snapping suddenly in two pieces, and to make another with only one auger on board, and that a bad one, and no iron, was a task that taxed all our invention. However 'Patience and perseverance,'

they say, 'got a wife for his reverence,' and at all events it proved equal to the more difficult task of rigging us up something that would carry a sail, and brought us in sight of the island of Api or Tasiko just as our fresh provisions had run out.



THE SUBJECT OF THE PHOTOGRAPH.

CHAPTER VIII.

Island of Api—Propitiatory Offering—Wrecked Fiji Schooner—Cannibalism—Malicollomen—How to cook long Pig—Arrive at Motu Lava—Trip across the Island—A Photograph in the South Seas—Native Dance—‘ Music hath charms ’—Good-bye.

WE made the island of Api, then, early one morning ; and, lowering the two boats, pulled in, in a heavy swell, to see if we could recruit men, and especially to try for yams and pigs. A reef extending for miles along the shore makes it by no means an easy place to land on, and just then the waves were breaking and hissing at half-tide, sometimes rising like a wall, sometimes leaving the whole reef exposed, and forming one vast line of spray.

Our boats soon attracted crowds of natives with green branches in their hands—a sign of peace ; but no passage in the reef could we find. We had, indeed, one little boy on board to land there, but he had almost forgotten what part of the island he came from ; so we pulled up and down in despair, not venturing to face the breakers, and by no means encouraged by a nearer inspection of the gentlemen on shore, about whose bloodthirsty and treacherous character we had heard so much. Finding that this boy did not know the navigation, we persuaded him to swim ashore, promising to wait till he had brought off a canoe to take his chest. At last he appeared mounted on a little canoe, which at every wave almost disappeared under the water, bringing his father with him, who had not forgotten to fetch a propitiatory offering in the shape of one wretched little half-starved pig. His eyes brightened with delight at the sight of the huge chest his son had brought. His pig was given to the boat's crew, and used to run about the deck with a necklace of twigs round his neck ; till some older pig, wrathful at this, must have killed him in the night, as he was found dead. When the tide ebbed the natives swam off to the reef and opened trade with us, and brought us out of the water, at the side of the boat, some

lovely specimens of coral ; but they distrusted us so much that not one of them could be induced to lay aside his bow and arrows, but held them in his hand while he waded along with a yam in the other ; and I, not to be behindhand in courtesy, took care to let them see my revolver hanging to my wrist while I paid them in beads and fish-hooks.

These natives, like most of their neighbours, are thorough-going cannibals, and many a tale could I unfold of the white and black men they have roasted and eaten. In the midst of our bargaining we heard from our late passenger that there had been a ship stranded a few days previously, somewhat further down the coast, so we started off at once and soon descried the wreck in the distance. The vessel was a New Zealand schooner in search of labour for Fiji, and she lay upon the reef with her back broken. The crew, consisting of five or six whites, with some twenty islanders, had only succeeded in saving one of the sails, together with their arms and trade-box. They had formed a sort of camp on the beach, which was guarded by sentries with muskets. Round this swarmed innumerable fierce-looking Api men, each armed with his bow and bundle of poisoned arrows, and evidently only restrained by the sight of the muskets from making a rush at the trade-box, which

they knew was so full of what was to them untold wealth. They cleared out, however, on seeing us, and allowed us to approach the tent where the poor whites had been shut up for three or four days; and I found myself the object of attraction to three little black boys; who, appreciating I suppose something in my face, never left my side till I had promised to take them with me. Poor fellows! two of them never lived to get on board; decoyed away by the Api men the same night, the third with difficulty escaped to tell us how his two brothers had been knocked on the head and immediately roasted. I fancy the whole of these castaways would have shared the same fate if we had not had the good fortune to pass so near them and take them off the island. The surviving boy is now on a plantation in Queensland, and looked happy and flourishing when I last saw him.

I bought the wreck as she lay on the reef, and we had three hard days' work stripping her of all her spars, wire-rigging, cables and anchor, and every piece of iron that the natives had left; and it was a service of some danger, as the chiefs, seeing what our intentions were, surrounded the ship and insisted that she was their property; and I had to put five or six of the boat's crew in a circle round her, armed

with guns, and with orders to fire if the natives made a rush, allowing no one on board till he had laid down his club and bow. At the request of her late master we set fire to the wreck, and she was soon burning merrily, giving the Api men a bonfire at which they would have been only too glad to roast some of us; and, setting off to regain our own schooner, fired a last salute over her remains.

Talking about cannibalism reminds me of a ghastly story I heard, but for which, as it did not occur to myself, I cannot vouch. A white man living in Fiji had a boat's crew of men from Malicollo, the next island to Api, and with them he used to make long excursions all over the South Seas. One cruise, however, when he happened to have a white man with him, his blacks seemed suddenly to have taken a great fancy for learning navigation, and persisted in having the use of the compass explained to them, always asking whereabouts Malicollo was. At last they rose on the unsuspecting whites, killed the captain and turned the boat's head west, in the direction in which they knew their native island lay. They sailed so for many days, apparently taking little notice of the remaining white man. Conceive his horrible position. They had roasted his friend, and kept offering him pieces in derision to eat, or

threw them in his face, covering him with blood ; and he knew well that as soon as that body was finished his own turn would come ; and all this time they were steadily sailing with the trade-wind towards the island where he felt sure he must die sooner or later. I wonder the situation did not drive him mad—the heat, thirst, loneliness, and the having constantly before his eyes the fast diminishing body of his friend. The story goes on to say, however, that by some extraordinary fortune they actually did hit on the island of Malicollo, having threaded the mass of islands that lay between, by which time he was reduced to such despair that he begged the savages to finish him off at once ; but no ! . . . their minds had changed, or they had suddenly tired of human flesh ; so he lived on Malicollo in a sort of slavery for years, till he managed by some feint to get on board a whaler. Though I cannot vouch, as I said, for the above story, I am convinced that it is quite possible, and the fact of their allowing either of the men to escape seems the strangest part of it all. Some little time after hearing this story I managed to get a Malicollo native for my boat's crew who spoke good English, and he seemed to know the story and corroborated it.

On Tanna, a celebrated man-cook—I mean a cooker of men—detailed to me the process which is *de rigueur* in the cooking of human flesh, and which is supposed to impart a peculiar relish to such a feast. A shallow hole is dug in the ground, and filled with fire and round stones; when the fire is burnt out and the stones red hot, the body is split open and the stones are put inside; it is then wrapped round and round with leaves to keep it from being burnt, and laid in the native oven, and a large fire built on the top of it, till sufficiently baked. The leaves, he told me, keep in the juices, and, I suppose, give it the sort of tenderness which we find in ‘*côtelettes en papillote*.’ I believe the Newzealander’s method of cooking what he calls ‘long pig’ is much the same, and I have seen human flesh-forks that have come from the Fiji Islands, made of wood, so beautifully carved as to show apparently a high state of civilisation! Altogether, I can quite understand the great dislike whaling ships have of getting too close to these islands in the treacherous currents, as they know that, unless they can save men and arms enough to make them masters of the situation, a native oven will be their inevitable fate.

The aborigines of Australia, on the other hand—

though of course often driven to cannibalism in self-preservation, during a dry season—seem to look on it generally as a sort of melancholy duty they owe their friends; and I have seen gins (the native women) carrying about the well-picked bones of their dead relations for months at a time. I remember a little girl, child of a very nice black couple we had on a cattle-station in Queensland, who died; and as the father was half civilised and very fond of the child, he wished it buried in the earth in white-man fashion; but the tribe of which he was king insisted on its being roasted, and it was accordingly formally divided amongst them and eaten with all the honours.

But enough of this unpleasant subject. Leaving Api, we sailed slowly northwards, passing Ambrym, where a great volcano raises its head 3,500 feet, till it touches the clouds; past Pentecost and Aoba or Leper's Island, not daring to call at these islands, which are shunned by every trader since the days of the sandal-wood getters; and having Vanua Lava on our left, and Motu—where the late Bishop Patteson had at one time formed a small mission—on our right, we made steadily on for Motu Lava, called Valua on the chart. The whole of our remaining passengers belonged to this place, and we

were sure of a welcome, especially as we had a chief's son on board.

I look back with pleasure to the week we spent among these people, who are as yet in a state of primitive simplicity, and more disposed to welcome white men than natives generally are. It was such a rest, after the fatigues and dangers of our cruise, that we were prepared to appreciate it. Our Motu Lava passengers, decked out in their best clothes, clustered in the rigging, and hailed with cheers every fresh view that opened out to us, as we dropped slowly to our anchorage. More than one of them wore tall black hats, and all wore collars and neckties, putting our own disreputable clothing to shame; and they were certainly a contrast to their less fortunate uncles and aunts, who had absolutely nothing on. Our decks were soon crowded with inquirers for long absent friends; and, having regaled as many as we could with biscuits and tea, we started for the shore, where the joyful natives received us, with great respect; and R—— and myself, both tolerably heavy men, were carried pick-a-back across the reef, the sharp points of the coral seeming to make no impression on the horny feet of our bearers.

Getting all our boat's crew together, we set off

across the island, where a great dance was to be held. We tramped through narrow jungle-paths for miles, passing through the numberless little villages which are so thickly strewed over the country, and causing great excitement amongst the women and children, who rushed out to gaze at us, at first in fear, but who, gathering courage from a nearer inspection, joined our procession, and crowded so close on us as almost to stop our way. I had armed all my own followers for fear of accidents, but I believe it was quite unnecessary; and at every halt we used to have a little target practice with revolvers at the trees, or at cocoa-nuts set up on a stick, greatly to the edification of the islanders, who were never tired of examining these little weapons, and who hailed every good shot with cries of astonishment, as the bullets went right through the soft young trees which grow here.

When we felt thirsty we had only to signify as much, and forthwith some graceful young girl would start off, and climbing a cocoa palm, throw us down clusters of juicy green cocoa-nuts, the tough outside fibre of which was torn open by the teeth of our attendants. I know nothing more delicious on a hot day than the green cocoa-nut, before the milk inside has hardened into the ripe nut; it has a

peculiar sweet taste, which seems to relieve thirst better than anything else. On many of these islands no fresh water is found, and the natives live entirely on this juice, which of course in such a climate is forthcoming all the year round.

One of my boat's crew, a boy belonging to this island, had had himself photographed in Brisbane. It was a very second-rate photograph, the sort of thing one used to get framed and glazed for a shilling at the Crystal Palace, but Sir Joshua Reynolds himself never gained more sincere praise for his best portrait. It was handed round and wondered at both back and front; in fact I believe many of the islanders thought it was alive, and the lucky boy whom it represented, though remarkably ugly by nature, actually began to give himself airs on his good looks; and I found him some time afterwards admiring himself and pulling up his shirt collar before a pocket looking-glass, evidently thinking that he could compare very favourably with his white master.

At last, however, we entered on an open green space, and found ourselves on the scene of the festivities. A huge hollow log had been scooped out till it was quite thin, and the ends filled up; at this was seated the chief musician, with a piece of

stick in each hand, while the dancers stood in long single file, one behind the other, ready to proceed at the first tap of the drum. They were all painted and had their hair dressed with feathers; and the word being given, they started in a sort of slow march, or minuet step, keeping beautiful time, and whistling shrilly in chorus; the drum beat faster and faster, and they stamped with more energy, till the perspiration streamed off them. This had not gone on long, before my boys, who had been restlessly shifting about, first on one leg and then on the other, as the well-remembered roll of the drums struck their ears, could restrain themselves no longer, but threw away their arms, rushed in and took their places, while R—— and I, not wishing to remain altogether wall-flowers, brought up the procession, singing at the top of our voices. A little of such exercise, however, in latitude 13° 14' south goes a long way, and we soon had to return to our shady tree and begin again at the cocoa-nuts; where our black friends came round and listened attentively, while R—— struck up a comic song, and they caught up the refrain of the chorus, and made the old jungle of Motu Lava ring with the unaccustomed strains of 'Champagne Charley,' or 'Slap bang, Here we are again.' Music is an inexhaustible

pleasure to all islanders, but especially to these Motu Lava men, who seem to spend their whole time over it, and whose ears are astonishingly quick at catching a new tune. Their own songs are in a high falsetto, and the words seem to be invented on the spur of the moment. Having once found out R——'s powers of singing, they kept him at it, poor fellow ! till nature gave in, and his sailor-songs will, I fancy, be long remembered there. Often during our subsequent passage to Queensland did I start all the different natives on board at their national dances ; and the scene of babel that ensued while one tribe jumped and howled, another stamped and shrieked, and a third whistled plaintively, used to drive the mate engaged on his navigation nearly mad, and he would rush frantically on deck with a volley of execrations which only added to the noise.

Several of the men we had brought from Brisbane to this island volunteered to return with me, and divided all their newly-acquired wealth amongst their people, giving every one his share of calico and beads ; and the scene of crying that ensued amongst the women, when the whole procession—men, women, children, recruits and all—arrived on the beach, I shall never forget. However the best of friends must part sooner or later, and after having faith-

fully promised to go and see them again in two moons at the latest, and having been offered as much land and power as I liked if I would settle there for good, we shoved off, having at last got our full complement of men, and said good-bye to the only island of the South Seas in which I could get rid of the continual uneasy feeling that someone was aiming a spear at me from behind a tree.



ORI WOMEN UPSET OUT OF THEIR CANOE.

CHAPTER IX.

Ureparapara—'Mark day'—Sea-sickness—'A soft Answer'—More Recruits—Cotton-growing on Tanna—Buying Land—Yams—Tanna—Bread-fruit—Two Styles of Civilisation—Earthquakes—Island Quadrupeds.

A TRIP to Ureparapara, one of the Bank's Islands, and inhabited by a tribe speaking the same language, to land another native, completed the outward-bound part of my cruise, and we prepared for a long beat to the southward against the S. E. trades, homeward bound. We happened to arrive in Ureparapara Bay on what they call 'mark day,' which is a ceremony that answers to our old border custom of 'riding the marches.' Every tribe turns out dressed

in its best—I mean of course *the hair* dressed—and marches solemnly round the boundaries of its respective territory, ending up with a dance, as usual, in the evening; so we did not see many natives on the beach, and were delighted to get out of this land-locked bay, which the shifting currents of air that came down from the hills rendered a very difficult process indeed. So partial were the gusts of wind we got, that I have seen the fore-topsail dead aback, while the foresail itself was drawing beautifully.

The only traces of religious belief I have observed in any of these islands were a few masks which I found on Motu Lava; they were kept in a separate grass house, and were evidently looked up to by the women and children with awe. The men, however, laughed at them, and even put them on at my request and danced about. There is certainly a virgin soil for missionaries to work on here, and I believe that they would be pretty well received by the younger men at all events, who reap the benefit of their presence; the principal opponents of Christianity on the Islands being of course old and rich men, who have bought several wives, and do not care to see polygamy abolished.

The Bank's Islanders, as I think I have mentioned,

have the custom of tattooing; which they do very neatly with a sharp fish-bone, three little points being tied to a stick and hammered into the flesh. I saw the operation successfully performed on one of our white crew; but as they seemed to have no originality of design, beyond a star or cross, I declined to have it tried on my own person.

Here we are, then, clear of Ureparapara, with the south-easter making us dive and pitch in the chopping seas as we thrash laboriously against it; and now commence the troubles of my new friends. Their faces of astonishment and dismay at the heavy waves, the way they refused their food, and huddled together like sheep, refusing to go below although the spray drenched them through and through, need not be described. All these things, and worse, may be seen any rough day on board of a Dover and Calais packet; but I fancy that most of them, if they could have had the choice during that first storm, would have jumped at the idea of getting their feet safe on Motu Lava again, and would have given up all notion of going to Queensland even to learn to dress in shirts of many colours.

Nothing of any consequence happened as we slowly and laboriously passed the Islands of Espirito Santo and Malecola, off which latter islands several

large canoes hailed us ; and it turned out that starvation was amongst them, making them very glad to exchange their war-clubs and bows for pigs. Here too, I picked up Jack, a smart young native who had been on board of a whaler for a long time, and who spoke capital English. He advised us, however, not to land.

In about a fortnight we got to Sandwich, where I had to discharge my hired crew, and sent them on shore well pleased with a gun a-piece, a good store of tobacco, and a piece of calico, with powder and shot ; and I took an especially affectionate leave of their chief, again failing to tempt him to part with his beloved queue.

The natives here, seeing that we really had brought back their chief, looked on us as tried friends, and the vessel was quickly surrounded by canoes, most of them manned (if I may use the expression) by two or three old women bringing yams for sale. One of our boats, in passing an old woman, splashed her in the face for fun, upon which she got so angry that she made a spring at the offenders, upsetting her canoe and losing its contents, and swam to the ship demanding vengeance with shrill cries, her bald head coloured with turmeric, a bright yellow, and her skinny arms giving one the idea of some strange fish.

A present of a box of Bryant and May's matches soothed her feelings, but the matches were probably useless by the time she got on shore.

Leaving Vaté at last for good, a beat of sixty miles took us in two days to Tanna again, to lay in a fresh store of pigs and yams for our final start for Queensland.

Charlie, one of the Tanna men I had, had always been pestering me for leave to go on shore and say good-bye again to his friends ; so, just to try his good faith, I let him go, and in two days he reappeared with four more men, whom he had recruited, and who were immensely disgusted on being told there was no room for them, as they had already cut their hair short to be in white-man fashion.

I slept on shore here for two nights at the house of —, who has got already about seventy acres of land under cotton, and cultivates it with tolerable success. He has a hand-gin which works well, and the quality and staple of the cotton I saw turned out by it was very good. His labourers are mostly Motu Lava men and women, and turn out with great regularity every morning to the sound of the bell, and work all day contentedly enough, though looked on with a good deal of suspicion by the Tanna men themselves. Their pay is about the same as it

is in Queensland ; and as they require no clothes and raise their own yams and pigs, the labour is very cheap. They are only hired for one year at a time.

The cotton-growing in Tanna, which already seems to show signs of being a great business in the future, is only a thing of the last three or four years ; but the climate is so good, and the rich volcanic soil so really magnificent, that a very few years will, I think, see it a rival of the Fijis in this production.

While we stayed here R—— bought a large tract of land, certainly not less than 1,000 acres, paying for it in trade about 25*l.*, the conditions being that he should reside there in person, so as to bring trade to that particular tribe ; that he should leave the villages and cava houses alone, and that he should always help his particular tribe in case of a row—all which agreement I solemnly witnessed and signed, sitting cross-legged on the beach, having a large sheet of paper in my hand and my revolver lying across my knee. Since that time R—— has taken a couple of draught horses down to Tanna with him, but whether the cotton plantation is progressing I have not heard. As to the exact value of Tanna cotton I cannot speak ; the samples which I showed to merchants in Brisbane were much approved of, and I really think—and hereby publish

the fact for the benefit of all whom it may concern—that of all the speculations a man of small capital can best go in for, cotton-growing on Tanna is the most promising, provided of course that the intending settler has a stout heart, is a fair shot with a pistol, and really means to work at his plantation, and not sit down on the beach all day, making his natives feed him. Any Tanna chief would be delighted to get a white man with his trade-box to stop with him, and would protect and fight for him to the last drop of his blood; but then, the white man must have a thorough knowledge of native character, and above all must let the chief see that the white man makes rules for himself, and goes with the tribe as king and not as subject.

While on the subject of agriculture I may as well describe the vegetable products of these islands, and at the head of these stands the yam. This is a sort of vine-like plant of the same nature as the sweet potato, and which sends down one long tap-root. It takes five months to come to perfection, so that the natives have two crops in the year; it has a delicious mealy flavour, and is very nourishing; it is the principal article of food, and the chief trade with all vessels. They always roast it themselves, and are very fond of it; but boiled in salt

water like the English potato, it is, I think, still better. It grows sometimes to an astonishing size, and I brought two specimens to Brisbane of seven or eight feet in length and as thick as a man's thigh. The smaller ones, however, are the best to eat. The inside is white, sometimes red, but always good and wholesome, and makes a capital substitute for bread or potatoes, which latter are not to be procured on the islands.

Of much the same nature, but of even better taste, is the tara, a thick round root like a mangold-wurzel; but it is difficult to get it, the privilege of eating it being considered on many islands as belonging to the chiefs only. These root-crops remind me of a curious superstition I met with on Sandwich. The father of one of my boat's crew had lately died, and his son was debarred by the custom of the island from eating anything that came up out of the ground, for I forget how many moons. He was, as my readers may imagine, very thin in consequence when he came to me, and had to be fed upon biscuits and pork for some time before he regained his strength, but nothing would induce him to touch a yam.

The cocoa-nut palm and its fruit needs perhaps no description, as it is so well known in all tropical countries, and I am sure that the natives of these

islands would thrive perfectly well on it and nothing else, eating the ripe nut and drinking the milk of the green in default of water. Bananas grow here, but do not flourish very well, perhaps from want of good cultivation; the fruit is much smaller than that grown in Australia, and though sweet has no flavour.

The bread-fruit tree grows well, and the dried fruit makes a delicious sort of biscuit; and besides these fruits and roots, they have spice-nuts of various kinds which they make into a cake and eat hot; and altogether, if these islands were not so densely populated, the natives would be pretty well off, though as it is I fancy that hundreds of them in the year die of starvation on some islands, which fact perhaps makes cannibalism a necessity of existence.

All the field-labour is done by the women, as is generally the custom among savage tribes; and you see large groups of them in the yam-patches felling and burning the scrub, and clearing new plantations for themselves, as their idea of cultivation is, that when one piece of land does not yield well, it is not worth while to continue working on it any longer, but shift to another patch and begin again. And I have often thought that an islander, when first brought to Queensland and set to work in the fields, must have some very curious reflections passing

through his mind when he sees the 'white missus' dressed in gay attire, taking her ease under her verandah, and looking at her husband working very hard with his men in the fields, under the full glare of an Australian sun. Whether he thinks us the more civilised race of the two, I am not prepared to say.

While sleeping that night on Tanna, I had a new experience of life, to wit, an earthquake, and a pretty violent one. About the middle of the night a heavy sickening roll made me dream I was on board again; and I had just turned round, to try and get another snooze, when with a crash I tumbled off the bed, and rushing out of the house, found all the whites and natives too, in a state of the greatest trepidation, and holding on to the sides of the house as if they were on the deck of a rolling ship. They all wished to go on board; evidently the earth would open and swallow them up. But we had no more shocks, and at last gathered courage to turn in again. Even if the house had fallen in upon us, I do not think it would have hurt us much, as it was only built of dry grass, and thatched with leaves of the cocoa-nut, as indeed are all the houses I have seen on the islands.

A native going to bed in his house simply lies down on the bare clay, which is generally strewed

with a little small shingle; and putting a block of wood under his neck to keep his elaborately-dressed locks from being disordered, snores peacefully, while his wife sits up to see that the fire is kept alight, and takes the opportunity to smoke her husband's tobacco.

We read in Captain Cook's voyages that goats and dogs were left on some of the South Sea Islands, but the goats have entirely disappeared from the New Hebrides. Some few wretched dogs, indeed, with sharp noses, prick ears and bushy tails, are sometimes seen upon the beach, whose ancestors may have sailed in the 'Endeavour' just a hundred years ago; but if so, they have nearly reverted to their great ancestor the jackal, and the bark of civilisation is the only thing they have retained to show their origin. Beyond these and pigs I have seen no quadrupeds. Fowls abound on all the Islands, but they have run out so small as to be more like bantams than the sort of speckled Hamboroughs they must originally have come from. The wild birds are scarce, and all go under the generic name of pigeon; very few gulls are to be seen on the water, and only a species of green fruit-eating dove on the land. We formed a party once, while on Motu Lava, to shoot these birds, and succeeded in getting five-and-twenty or thirty of

them by careful stalking. Their flesh is delicious, and resembles that of the pink-breasted fig-eater of the Australian scrub. But the natives, having no guns, and being such bad shots with their bows, very seldom succeed in killing any.



THE ISLAND OF ERROMANGO.

CHAPTER X.

Fever and Ague—Medicine—Dosing a Native—Medical Mission—
Physique—Drinking 'Cava'—Arms—Animal Poison—Then
Home.

BEFORE I leave the subject of Tanna and its prospects, I must mention that fever and ague are as common there as they are on all tropical coasts, and the disease assumes a peculiarly virulent form in the case of white men living on the beach, leaving however, the hills, which appear to be perfectly free from this exhausting sickness.

Some few miles from the cotton plantation I have

described, two white men had settled under the care of my friend 'Washerwoman,' and had built themselves a little grass hut close to the water's edge, for the purpose of making 'copera,' which is the inside of the ripe cocoa-nut split and dried on a sort of gridiron, and sold to the traders for the Sydney and New Caledonia markets.

Hearing of my arrival, these men sent me a message to come and see them, as one of them was in a dying condition. When I got there, however, the tribe which protected them seemed very little disposed to let me pass, possibly because I had been paying a visit to some of their enemies; and it was not until I had produced a big bottle, and said that I came to cure their white men, that they allowed me to approach. One of the poor fellows was lying on the bare earth in the last stage of exhaustion, rambling incoherently to himself about some scene of his youth; his native labourers would not come near him to give him a drink, and the fits had already got so bad as to recur twice in the same day. The large doses of Hollands and sulphate of quinine I administered at last brought him round, but they were obliged to shift their house up on to a higher spot immediately.

And here I may remark what a very useful thing

a little knowledge of the simpler medicines, and a well filled chest, is in the South Seas. Scarcely a day passed without my being called in as a doctor to some native, either amongst my coolies or on shore. Epsom salts, castor oil, opium, quinine, Holloway's ointment, and linseed, are nearly sufficient for everything ; but sometimes more violent remedies would be required, such as bluestone, &c. Brandy, too, has an astonishing medicinal effect on a native, a teaspoonful being generally sufficient to rouse him, even if very ill with fever. I remember being much struck by a naked savage on a reef, up to his neck in water, demanding Epsom salts, 'kiki' (eating) salts he called them, and refusing all other trade, though I am pretty sure, judging from the place in which I found him, he had never seen a white man's face before.

Their own panacea for everything seems to be a copious draught of salt water, which, however cheap, is not good in every case. But, at all events, the native is an easy patient to deal with ; instead of cavilling at the treatment, and putting the doctor through his facings as to what good such and such a drug in the prescription can possibly do him, he just opens his mouth and swallows everything like a good child ; and his faith in medicine is so strong,

that the remedies almost always turn out to have done him good ; and a homœopathist might travel far in Europe before he found such hopeful subjects, if, as the opponents of that system say, the patient's own imagination is the doctor's strongest weapon. I remember on Tanna a very great chief came to me



A CULTIVATED COOLIE.

most submissively and complained of being sick, placing his hands expressively on the seat of the evil ; whereupon, anxious to create a good impression on the crowd, I sat him solemnly down on the beach, cross-legged, with his face to the sun, which was just setting ; and taking my watch in one hand, and

a large blue pill in the other, I 'held him with my glittering eye,' till, just as the sun went down, I popped the pill into his mouth and told him that in the morning when the sun got up he must drink the huge dose of salts with which I presented him, weighing about three ounces, and he would be all right. I consider it due to myself to say that the result justified my expectations, and the chief ranks me among his greatest friends from that day, and has on every occasion since then delighted to honour me by coming on board the schooner and drinking as much pale ale as I would supply him with.

I know of no stronger weapon in all dealings with savage races than medicine; I found it of much more service in making an impression than any display of wealth or arms, and it creates besides a confidence and feeling of good fellowship that is not easily marred. I remember creating a great sensation amongst a lot of natives by administering to one a dose of ipecacuanha and tartar emetic, and telling the bystanders that when the hand of my watch got to a certain place that man would be very sick; and so he was, *very sick*, and the astonishment was proportionably great.

Why should not all missions to blacks be put on some such basis as what we call in England a medical

mission ? Why should not the intending missionary supply himself with a large stock of simple and strong remedies for dysentery, fever, and ague etc., and begin the good work he has on hand by healing the sick ? I believe that this would be not only the quickest but the safest way of getting a chance to minister to their souls also, and a native who should propose to his countrymen to kill the doctor would run a bad chance for his own life at their hands.

The physical constitution of an Islander is, after all, very bad. He has seldom any chest, and never any stamina ; and though he very often looks a strong man, he is always flabby and soft, and walks in a lazy, slouching sort of way, that is the very opposite of his black brother, the aborigine of Australia, who, if lower than the Islander in intellect, is a wiry, hard, active and muscular man, always in training, and always fit to climb the tallest tree in the bush for his dinner, or ride the most vicious horse you can find him. This may be partially owing to the difference in their feeding, the Islander living almost wholly on yams, while the Australian rarely eats anything but meat ; but I think it is mostly because the Islander has such a glorious climate and soil that the fruits of the earth grow for him almost untilled, and that it is a much easier thing to send out one's wife

to dig up a yam for dinner than to run down a kangaroo. As an instance of the difference in physique, I may mention that a native, brought from Api, fell sick, and had to be taken to the Brisbane hospital. In the next bed to him lay an aborigine who had been nearly killed in some drunken quarrel, and was apparently dying; and I was surprised to hear the surgeon say that in a fortnight that man would be as well as ever, while as for the Api native he had no chance, as a South Sea islander never recovers from a serious illness, but gives up in despair and lies quietly waiting for death. When I next was able to visit the hospital I found the surgeon's word had come true: my man was buried; while I saw the aborigine up a tree in the court-yard, very contentedly cutting away with his tomahawk, as if ten days before his life had not hung by a thread.

I had nearly forgotten to mention the great intoxicating drink of these islands, made from the cava root. This is a small plant with a fibrous root which is cultivated with great ceremony in every village, and has a separate house set apart for the observance of the rites connected with it. Only the men are allowed to drink it, and only after they are grown up; one or two old women of the village are chosen to prepare it, and sitting down, chew it in

small pieces, spitting the plentiful saliva which is caused by it into a bowl. Having filled as many bowls as may be required, they retire and take care to keep out of sight while the men go into the hut and, standing in a row, swallow it at a gulp exactly as the sun goes down. It tastes like soapsuds and has a stupefying effect, and for two hours after sundown no native is quite in possession of his senses. I tried to prepare it myself by maceration in water, but I suppose the principal ingredient was absent, as I could not appreciate any delicacy in the draught, and it had what Sam Weller calls 'a strong flavour of warm flat-irons.'

The arms in use among the islanders of the New Hebrides consist, as I have already said, of bows and arrows, spears, clubs and hatchets. The bow is a very short one, though tough and powerful; the arrows, though harmless-looking, are, next to firearms, the most deadly weapons I have seen. They are tipped with animal poison by dipping the points into a putrid corpse and letting the matter dry on; this poison will, I believe, retain its virulence for about six months. The only reputed cure for a wound by one of these arrows is the great snake-bite antidote, immediate injection of strong ammonia into a vein by Professor Halford's method. It is said to rouse

the patient from the torpor, and to stop the swelling and intense pain that follows the poison of the arrow.

Their clubs are elaborately carved, and always carried suspended by a thong from the waist ; their spears are, I think, more for show than for use, and in some of the islands are made entirely of fish-bones, neatly jointed in, and projecting in all directions, or out of the back-bones of two or three sharks joined together. Weapons made of greenstone, in the Maori fashion, they do not possess, though New Caledonia produces jade, and I have seen small pieces of jade on Tanna ; but I never could find out if it came from that island, which would be a strong presumption in favour of the idea that gold may also be found there. Perhaps the ancestors of the Tanna men, if the Maori origin doctrine be true, might have brought these stones with them from New Zealand.



PIPE'S GRIEF.

CHAPTER XI.

First sight of Brisbane—Coolies on the Plantations—Adapt themselves to circumstances—Divine Service—Burial of a Native—I leave, with mutual good wishes.

I SHALL pass over all the little incidents of our run home round Walpole Island for Brisbane, till we sighted Moreton light, all well, and sent a telegram

from the lighthouse station for the inspecting and health officer of the immigration department. A steam-tug came for us the same evening, and the Kanakas soon had cause for wonder and jabbering in what must have appeared to them a horrible monster, as seen in the dark, with its tall funnel sending out smoke and flame, and its paddles dashing up the foam, as it made fast, puffing and snorting, and took us up the Brisbane river. The inspecting officer's duty is to look over the list of the new immigrants, and to compare it with the papers furnished him by the master of the vessel, of the number on board; to see that they are not afflicted with any disease, and are neither 'maimed, halt, blind, deaf, dumb, idiotic, or insane;' and to give a certificate to that effect. All these formalities being got through, we dropped anchor in the middle of the town on Saturday night, and, late as it was, were glad to go on shore to a comfortable civilised bed with sheets, and slept none the worse for the knowledge that the difficulties and dangers of our South Sea cruise were over.

So far I have told the tale of my trip to the New Hebrides for labourers, and it only remains for me to give an account of what they were wanted for in Queensland, and how they fulfilled their duties in

their new life. Who shall describe the astonishment of these children of nature, at our houses, streets, horses, and women? For hours they would sit motionless, gazing at the stream of life hurrying past them on the wharves, and too much afraid of losing themselves to venture from the ship till taken away by their masters. Within two or three days the employers of all these men had come for them, had signed their agreements in presence of the immigration agent; and I said good-bye to most of my late friends, and saw them off with their various bundles *en route* for their different scenes of work, not without a sincere feeling of liking for the patient, docile fellows, who had put up with all the discomforts of a sea voyage, and the beginning of a life so totally unlike anything they could have imagined, with a good deal more philosophy than I have seen displayed by the same number of English emigrants; and who, even when the storm was at its highest, and cooking and sleeping by no means easy matters, only wanted a little chaff or two or three kind words to light up their faces with a grin.

The South Sea coolies have now been inhabitants of Queensland for several years, but I have scarcely ever heard of a single instance of bad behaviour on their part. They are provided with barracks or huts on

the plantations or sheep stations on which they are employed, and turn out every morning at six o'clock and work the customary hours with great cheerfulness. Most of them, certainly, never get beyond hoeing or corn-picking ; but some turn into capital horse-drivers, ploughmen, or sugar-boilers, and will, in the press of work in the sugar season, cheerfully toil on late at night over the steaming tache, getting a little extra tea, bread and butter, or tobacco served out to them for doing so, and presenting a marked contrast to the white men who are grumbling and growling all round them.

I quote from Mr. E. B. Kennedy's 'Four Years in Queensland' a few of the remarks of Mr. Spiller, a well-known sugar grower in the north of the colony, *à propos* of this :

'The work of these plantations is carried on with the mixed labour of Europeans and Polynesians, the latter in every case working well. To this fact I would earnestly draw the especial attention of some of the numerous letter-writers on the slavery question. I have had twenty of these labourers since May 1867. In the first onset I made it my study to learn their language, so that I can make them understand me ; and I began putting them to their work. It required all the patience I could

muster at first, but they gradually got acquainted with the use of different tools before unknown to them ; and now I am reaping the benefit, and proud to see every morning turning out for the field four good ploughmen, with their six bullocks each and drivers ; others with their horse-teams that can mark out a drill as straight as I can. Not only do they do their work well, but they are contented. I do not put them on rations ; they get all they require of beef, sweet potatoes, yams, corn-meal, green corn, arrowroot, sugar, molasses, milk, and one plug of tobacco per week. Tea they do not much care about, but when they want tea they are not afraid to ask for it. I find a great advantage in being able to talk to them, and I think it has helped to make them fond of me. They also like this country very much and often ask me to keep them, and get their wives over, and let them have a bit of land. They are far from being so ignorant as is often supposed ; they know well when the term of agreement expires, but they would much prefer having their wives over here, to returning to their native islands ; and in this I will certainly assist them, if the government will allow me to do so.'

All the above is entirely corroborated by my own experience. A few months is quite sufficient to make

them all fall naturally into their places ; and a judicious pitting of the natives of one island against those of another gets an immense deal of work out of them. It is quite astonishing to see the change in physique that a short stay on a plantation produces. The fat and grinning fellows working in the fields one would almost suppose to be of a different race from the thin and truculent-looking savage loitering on the beach, with an old musket in his hand, afraid of his own life, and on the look-out for somebody else to shoot at.

The coolies on the plantation I was connected with in Queensland were a very cheerful lot, and I for my part would sooner, for the sort of work I had in hand, have a gang of them than the same number of white men. I used to take them on expeditions in a steamer all about the coast, and they would work at any hour with great cheerfulness, fully rewarded if I lent them my gun, after working hours, to go and shoot pigeons in the scrubs—not that they ever hit any that I could hear of. Pulling off all they had on, and taking their spears, they would wade about in the mud that forms our Queensland sea-beach, and spear fish with great dexterity ; or, joining in a ring and improvising a drum, would dance and sing far into the night.

A few of them who had come from islands where there was a missionary, such as Lifu or Maré, used to appear regularly at church-time, in the little school-house where divine service was read; and would read out of their hymn-books, or join in the tunes with a vigour that would surprise a London congregation; and always crowded round at the close of the service, to go through the ceremony of shaking hands with the clergyman.

Most of them, however, spent their Sunday in wandering all over the country, visiting their friends at the neighbouring plantations; and sometimes, while riding late at night, I have seen little knots of two and three, all holding each other's hands, as is their fashion, starting out on some expedition.

One of these half-civilised boys, 'Jim Crow' by name, died on the plantation of consumption, and a coffin was made for him; he was laid out in state in his hut, and his countrymen came and told me they would pray over him. I was much struck by the devout way in which they all behaved: one of them said a long prayer; they then sang a hymn; then, standing up beside the body, 'Faith,' the leading man of the tribe, gave a long address to his countrymen, expatiating on all the good qualities of the deceased, and pointing upwards, told them, as far as

I could make out, that if they behaved themselves, they would see him again. This being done, they seemed to think they had cried enough over him ; and with much laughing and singing, they caught up the coffin, and ran by turns with it till they came to the place where the grave had been dug, followed by all the islanders on the place ; some of the latter, Tanna men, evidently thinking that it was a great waste of time and ceremony to bestow on so slight a matter as a dead man, and, bundling the coffin underground as quickly as possible, dispersed merrily.

I do not think I need follow the fortunes of my recruits any further. Suffice it to say that all, as far as I could hear, turned out well, and have, no doubt, by this time got through the first half of their three years of servitude, with credit to themselves and profit to their several employers. Often since then, while riding through the coast country, have I heard myself hailed by name ; and some Kanaka has rushed out to shake hands, and asked me to go and fetch his brother or his wife, and bring them on to the same plantation ; and has invariably, when questioned, professed himself satisfied with his master, his place, and his food. My favourite boy, Pipe, who pulled stroke-oar in my boat, pestered me for a long time to be allowed to go with me to England. He fol-

lowed me to the ship in which I was leaving the colony, and it was only by ghastly tales of English frost and snow that I finally persuaded him to go ashore. The last thing I saw of my pet South Sea Islander was somebody in my old Sydney hat and a pilot coat many sizes too big for him, crying bitterly behind one of my old pocket-handkerchiefs on the wharf, as I sailed away.

APPENDIX.

*The following is the Act of Parliament relating
to the subject of this Book.*

QUEENSLAND.



ANNO TRICESIMO PRIMO.

VICTORIÆ REGINÆ.

No. 47.

*An Act to Regulate and Control the Introduction and
Treatment of Polynesian Laborers.*

[ASSENTED TO 4TH MARCH, 1868.]

WHEREAS many persons have deemed it desirable and necessary in order to enable them to carry on their operations in tropical and semi-tropical agriculture to introduce to the colony Polynesian laborers And whereas it is necessary for the prevention of abuses and for securing to the laborers proper treatment and protection as well as for securing to the employer the due fulfilment by the immigrant of his agreement that

Preamble,

an Act should be passed for the control of such immigration Be it therefore enacted by the Queen's Most Excellent Majesty by and with the advice and consent of the Legislative Council and Legislative Assembly of Queensland in Parliament assembled and by the authority of the same as follows—

Not lawful to introduce Polynesian laborers except according to regulations.

1. It shall not be lawful for any person or persons to introduce any Polynesian laborers into the Colony of Queensland unless and except in accordance with the regulations contained in this Act and the forms thereunto attached.

Present employers to make returns within four months from passing of Act.

2. Within four months from the passing of this Act all persons who have in their employment any Polynesian laborers shall make a return to the Immigration Agent or other authorised agent of all such laborers in their employment setting forth the number and names of such laborers the nature and duration of their agreements together with all such particulars as may be required.

Penalty for failure in making returns.

3. Any person employing any Polynesian laborers who shall fail to make a return as required by the foregoing clause shall on conviction of the same before any two justices of the peace be subject to a penalty not exceeding fifty pounds.

Act to apply to employers and laborers at time of passing.

4. The provisions of this Act shall so far as practicable be applied to all Polynesian laborers introduced into this Colony before the passing of this Act and to their employers.

Inspectors to be appointed.

5. The Governor with the advice of the Executive Council shall appoint from time to time such person or persons as shall be found requisite for the proper inspection of the said Polynesian laborers and enforcing the provisions of this Act.

6. All persons desirous of importing laborers from the South Sea Islands shall make application to the Colonial Secretary at Brisbane in the Form A appended hereto stating the number required and how they are to be employed such application to be accompanied by a bond in Form K signed by applicant and two sureties to secure the return of the laborers to their native islands at the expiration of three years or thirty-nine moons from date of arrival A license in Form C may then be issued authorising the applicant to import the number required.

Form of
application.

7. The owner or charterer of any vessel so licensed shall provide for the use of the passengers a supply of medicines medical comforts instruments and other things proper and necessary for diseases and accidents incident to sea voyage and for the medical treatment of the passengers during the voyage including an adequate supply of disinfectant fluid or agent together with printed or written directions for the use of the same respectively and such medicines medical comforts instruments and other things shall in the judgment of the emigration officer at the port of clearance be good in quality and sufficient in quantity for the probable exigencies of the intended voyage and shall be properly packed and placed under the charge of the medical practitioner when there is one on board to be used at his discretion In case of non-compliance with any of the requirements of this section the master of the ship shall for each offence be liable to a penalty not exceeding fifty pounds nor less than five pounds sterling.

Vessel to be
properly
found.

Penalty.

8. The master of any vessel arriving with Polynesian laborers shall be bound to report on arrival at any of the ports of Queensland the number of such laborers

Master of
vessel to
report arrival,
&c.

and the names of the employers to whom they have been or are to be indented and shall not be permitted to land any of the immigrants until he has received the certificate (Form L) of the Immigration Agent or other officer of the Government empowered to grant same that the following regulations have been complied with—

Master of
vessel to
produce
certificate.

(1.) The production by the master of the vessel of a certificate in Form I or certificates signed by a consul missionary or other known person that the laborers have voluntarily engaged themselves and entered into their agreements with a full knowledge and understanding of the nature and conditions of same and that when they were embarked they were not known to be afflicted with any disease and were neither maimed halt blind deaf dumb idiotic or insane.

Employers
to produce
certificate of
Immigra-
tion Agent.

(2.) The production by the employers or parties to whom the laborers are or are intended to be indented of the certificate in Form C authorising them to recruit.

Immigrants
to under-
stand the
nature of
their agree-
ments.

(3.) That proper means have been taken since the arrival of the ship by the Immigration Agent or other officer by explanations questions and enquiries amongst the laborers themselves to ascertain whether they have a proper understanding of the conditions of the agreements and did voluntarily enter into same That the agreements have been signed in the form prescribed and the employers bound to observe the rules laid down for the treatment and management of the laborers.

9. All agreements (Form D) shall be completed on board the ship if possible and the immigrants taken from same by their employers and should there arise a necessity for taking any of the laborers to the Immigration Depôt their maintenance there shall in all cases be borne by the employer.

Agreements to be completed on board ship where practicable.

10. The arrival of the immigrants shall be registered in the Immigration Office Brisbane or at the Custom House in any other port and in the latter case a copy of the register shall be forwarded by the Customs officer to the Immigration Office by following mail.

Immigrants to be registered on arrival.

11. The scale of rations and wages shown in Form G and printed on the form of agreement shall in no case be deviated from.

Scale of rations.

12. A register of hired Polynesian laborers shall be kept by each employer in Form E which shall be open for the inspection of any magistrate or other person appointed by Government for the purpose who shall record his visit therein No entry except the state of muster at the expiration of each quarter shall be made in the register of the employer unless from a document of hiring transfer death or desertion countersigned by the Immigration Agent or other authorised officer.

Register to be kept by employer.

13. No transfer of an immigrant shall be made except with the full consent of the transferror the immigrant and the Government in Form F and no immigrant shall be allowed to leave his employment under transfer until the same has been recorded in the books of the Immigration Office or other appointed office All transfers shall be signed by the transferror and immigrant in presence of a magistrate who shall before such signing explain to the immigrant the full meaning and effect of such transfer Provided that every transferree

Transfers how made.

shall enter into a bond similar to that of the transferror prior to any transfer being consented to.

Deaths or desertions to be reported immediately.

14. All deaths or desertions shall be immediately reported to the nearest bench of magistrates and to the Immigration Agent by the employer and in case of death a medical certificate of the cause thereof shall be forwarded if possible.

Masters of vessels to execute bonds prior to proceeding to hire laborers.

15. All masters of vessels about to proceed to the South Sea Islands in order to obtain laborers therefrom shall enter into a bond in form B with two sufficient sureties for the prevention of kidnapping and for the due observance of these regulations so far as they are concerned.

Number of passengers. (*Vide Imperial Act, 16 and 17 Vict. c. 84.*)

16. No ship shall carry a greater number of passengers than in the proportion of one statute adult to every twelve clear superficial feet allotted to their use. Provided that the height between decks shall not be less than six feet six inches from deck to deck when the height of the 'tween decks exceeds six feet six inches an extra number of passengers may be taken at the rate of one for every one hundred and forty-four cubic feet of space. Each ship must be fitted with open berths or sleeping places in not more than two tiers—the lowest tier shall be raised six inches from the deck and the interval between the two tiers of berths shall not be less than two feet six inches. All passengers shall be berthed between decks or in deck houses.

Proportion of passengers to deck area.

17. But no ship whatever her tonnage or superficial space of passenger decks shall carry a greater number of passengers on the whole than in the proportion of one statute adult to every five superficial feet clear for exercise on the upper deck or poop or if secured and fitted on the top with a railing or guard to the satisfac-

tion of the emigration officer at the port of clearance on any round-house or deck-house.

18. The length of the voyage to or from the South Sea Islands shall be computed at thirty days for sailing vessels and fifteen days for steamers. Length of voyage.

19. Three quarts of water daily during the voyage shall be allowed to each adult exclusive of the quantity used for cooking purposes. Water on the voyage.

20. Provisions shall be issued to each statute adult during the voyage according to the following scale namely :— Provisions on the voyage.

DAILY PROVISIONS FOR STATUTE ADULT.

	lbs.	oz.
Yams	4	0
Or rice	1½	0
Or maize meal	1½	0
Meat (pork or beef)	1	0
Tea	0	0½
Sugar	0	2
Tobacco (during good behaviour) per week .	0	1½

The undermentioned clothing shall be supplied to each labourer immediately on embarkation in advance :—

- 1 Flannel Shirt
- 1 Pair Trowsers
- 1 Blanket

21. Nominal returns of laborers shall be made by employers of South Sea Island labor to the Immigration Agent at the expiration of each quarter in Form H. Nominal return to be sent at expiration of each quarter.

Returns to be forwarded to Colonial Secretary each quarter.

22. At the end of each quarter the police magistrates or bench of magistrates in each district where South Sea Island laborers are employed shall forward to the Colonial Secretary a return of all cases adjudicated upon in relation to Polynesian laborers employed under these regulations such returns to include the names of employers and laborers and the nature of the offences.

Penalty for harbouring runaway laborers.

23. All persons harbouring or employing Polynesian laborers otherwise than under these regulations without reporting the same to the nearest bench of magistrates and to the Immigration Agent in Brisbane shall be liable on conviction thereof to a penalty not exceeding twenty pounds.

Breaches of regulations punishable by fine.

24. All breaches of these regulations shall be punishable by fine to be recovered in a summary manner before two justices of the peace for the first offence a fine not exceeding ten pounds for second and subsequent offences not exceeding twenty pounds nor less than five pounds.

Engagements subject to 25 Vic. No. 11.

25. All engagements made or to be made with Polynesian laborers already in the colony or to arrive are hereby expressly declared to be subject to the provisions of the Act twenty-five Victoria number eleven.

Tax on vessels in default of compliance.

26. A tax of twenty pounds per head for every Polynesian laborer introduced contrary to the provisions of this Act shall be levied on all vessels in which such laborers may be brought to this colony and in default of payment of such tax such vessel shall be absolutely forfeited to Her Majesty.

Expenses incurred by Government chargeable to employers

27. All expenses incurred by the Government in affording hospital relief to sick Polynesian laborers or by their detention in immigration depôts shall be

chargeable to the employers of such men and may be recovered from them by summary process on the information of Immigration Agent or other authorised officer.

in certain cases.

28. Any person who shall without the consent of the laborer and the written permission of the Government remove or attempt to remove any such laborer out of the Colony of Queensland except for the purpose of his return to his home shall be liable to a penalty of twenty pounds for every such laborer so removed or attempted to be removed and it shall be lawful for the Government in any case to prevent the removal of any such laborer except for the purpose of his return to his home as aforesaid.

Laborers not to be removed out of the colony without permission or consent.

29. Any person supplying Polynesian laborers with spirits shall be punishable as at present in the case of aborigines under fifty-first section of "*Licensed Publicans Act*" twenty-seven Victoria number sixteen.

Polynesian laborers not to be supplied with spirituous liquors.

30. It shall not be lawful for any employer of Polynesian laborers to charge such laborers with the payment of any moneys on account of stores supplied or to deduct any sum in respect thereof from any wages due to them.

Store accounts not to be deducted from wages.

31. This Act shall be styled and may be cited as the "*Polynesian Laborers Act of 1868.*"

Short title.

FORM A.

*Application for permission to introduce South Sea Island
agricultural or pastoral laborers.*

I request to be allowed in accordance
with the Act now in force to procure from the South Sea
Islands immigrants for agricultural or pastoral pur-
poses to be employed in the district. A.B.

Applicant's signature.

The above requisition lodged with me this day of
186 .

G. H.

Immigration Agent Queensland.

FORM B.

Bond to be entered into by Shipmasters.

Know all men by these presents that of of
and of are held and firmly bound unto our
Sovereign Lady Victoria by the grace of God of the United
Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland Queen Defender of
the Faith in the sum of five hundred pounds of good and
lawful money of Great Britain to be paid to our said Lady
the Queen her heirs and successors to which payment well
and truly to be made we bind ourselves and every of us
jointly and severally for and in the whole our heirs
executors and administrators and every of them firmly by
these presents.

Scaled with our seals

Dated this day of one thousand eight
hundred and

Whereas by the *Polynesian Laborers Act of 1868* it is amongst other things enacted that all masters of vessels proceeding to the South Sea Islands in order to obtain laborers therefrom shall enter into a bond with two sufficient sureties for the prevention of kidnapping and due observance of the requirements of the said recited Act Now the condition of this obligation is such that if the above-bounden J. K. master of ship about to proceed to the South Sea Islands to procure laborers shall faithfully observe the requirements of the said recited Act and shall satisfy the Government of Queensland through its officer duly appointed for the purpose that no kidnapping was allowed countenanced or connived at then this obligation to be void otherwise to remain in full force and virtue.

Signed sealed and delivered by the above-bounden [L s.] and in the presence of

I hereby certify that the above bond was duly signed sealed and delivered by the said and in my presence this day of 18 .
Immigration Agent.

FORM C.

License to recruit laborers from the South Sea Islands.

This is to certify that [or his agent] is hereby licensed to recruit immigrant laborers from the South Sea Islands for Queensland in conformity with the Act passed regarding such recruiting. This license is

to remain in force only until the number mentioned above have been recruited.

Dated this day of 186 .

Colonial Secretary of Queensland.

Immigration Agent Queensland.

N.B.—This license is to be returned to the Immigration Agent when the labourers have been received.

FORM D.

186 .

MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT made this day between
of of the first part and
native of per ship
of the second part The conditions are that the said party
of the second part engages to serve to the said party of the
first part as a and otherwise to make
generally useful for the term of calendar months
and also to obey all or overseer's
or authorised agents lawful and reasonable commands during that period in consideration of which services the said party of the first part doth hereby agree to pay the said party of the second part wages at the the rate of not less than six pounds (£6) per annum to provide with the understated rations daily to provide suitable clothing and proper lodging accommodation and to defray the expense of conveyance to the place at which to be employed to pay wages in the coin of the realm at the end of each year of the agreement and provide them with a return passage to their native Island at the expiration of

three years No wages shall be deducted for medical attendance.

DAILY RATION.

	lbs.	ozs.
Beef or mutton (or 2 lbs. of fish)	1	0
Bread or flour	1	0
Molasses or sugar	0	5
Vegetables (or rice 4 oz. or maize meal 8 oz.)	2	0
Tobacco per week	0	1½
Salt per week	0	2
Soap per week	0	4

CLOTHING.

	Yearly.
Shirts (one of flannel or serge)	2
Trowsers, pairs	2
Hat	1
Blankets, pair	1

In witness whereof they have mutually affixed their signatures to this document.

Witness :

The above contract was explained in my presence to the said immigrants and signed before me by them with their names or marks and by or his authorised agent at this day of 186 .

G. H.

Immigration Agent or Custom House Officer.

Registered at the office Brisbane Queensland this
day of 186 .

G. H.

Immigration Agent.

FORM F.

We [*name and designation of employer and names and numbers of immigrants engaged*] being respectively the master and servants under a contract of service made before the Government Emigration Agent at on the day do hereby agree that the whole rights and obligations of the said first party under the said contract shall be and the same are hereby transferred as at the date hereof to [*name and designation*] who hereby agrees to accept the said transfer and the contract hereby transferred with all its rights and obligations.

X.I. }
 A.B } *Signatures or marks of all the parties.*
 I. }

The above transfer signed by all the parties thereto its nature and effect having been first fully explained to the immigrants above-named all in my presence. The said transfer also approved and concurred in by me as on behalf of the Government.

At this day of 186

G.H.

Immigration Agent [*or Justice of the Peace.*]

Registered this day of 186

G.H.

Immigration Agent.

FORM G.

SCALE OF RATIONS.

Daily.

	lbs.	oz.
Beef or mutton (or 2 lbs. of Fish)	1	0
Bread or flour	1	0
Molasses or sugar	0	5
Vegetables (or rice 4 oz. or maize meal 8 oz.)	2	0
Tobacco per week	0	1½
Salt per week	0	2
Soap per week	0	4
Wages—Not less than six pounds (£6) per annum, in the coin of the realm.		

FORM H.

QUARTERLY RETURN.

Return of South Sea Islanders employed on the Plantation of
Name of Plantation *Post Town* *in the District of*
for quarter ending.

No.	Name.	From.	State of Muster on 31st March, 1868.	Transfers.	Desertions.	Deaths.	Remarks.
-----	-------	-------	--	------------	-------------	---------	----------

RECAPITULATION.

Number at date of last return
 Number transferred to plantation during above quarter

Deduct :—

Number died during above quarter
 Number transferred from plantation during above quarter

Number remaining on

Proprietor of
 and acknowledged

Registered at Immigration Office, Brisbane, on

Immigration Agent.

FORM I.

Whereas duly licensed by the Government of
 Queensland to recruit South Sea Island laborers according
 to license exhibited to us and natives of
 appeared before us this day of 186 .
 The said agent has hired the said natives to serve various
 employers in Queensland as laborers for a term of three
 years and undertakes that they shall be furnished with the
 undermentioned rations and clothing that they shall be
 paid at the rate of not less than six pounds (£6) per head
 per annum in coin of the realm that they shall be provided
 with proper lodging accommodation and that the cost of
 their passage to and from Queensland and all other costs
 and charges shall be defrayed by their employers and that
 they shall be returned free of expense to this place at the
 expiration of three years and that the Government of
 Queensland shall exercise supervision over their employers
 and otherwise protect them during their term of service
 and during their passage to and from Queensland.

Now we certify that this document has been read and its
 full meaning and effect explained to the said before-men-
 tioned natives in the presence of the said agent and of our-
 selves and that the said natives have consented to accom-
 pany said agent to Queensland And we further certify
 that to the best of our belief none of the said natives are
 suffering from any disease or are maimed halt blind deaf
 dumb idiotic or insane.

In witness whereof we have hereunto attached our
 signatures this day of 186 at

Missionary [*or* European Resident *or*
 Chief Interpreter].

Agent.

Natives.

CLOTHING PER ANNUM.

Hat	1
Shirts (one flannel or serge).	2
Trowsers, pairs	2
Blankets, pair	1

RATIONS PER DIEM.

	lbs.	oz.
Bread	1	0
Beef or mutton (or fish 2 lbs.)	1	0
Molasses or sugar	0	5
Vegetables (or rice 4 oz. or maize meal 8 oz.)	2	0
Tobacco (per week)	0	1½
Salt	0	2
Soap (per week)	0	4

Countersigned by Master of Vessel.

To be furnished to Immigration Agent or Customs' officer with report of arrival.

FORM K.

Form of Bond to be given by Employer.

Know all men by these presents that we A. B. of C. D. and E. F. of are held and firmly bound unto our Sovereign Lady Victoria by the grace of God of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland Queen Defender of the Faith in the sum of ten pounds of good and lawful money of Great Britain for each Polynesian laborer employed by us to be paid to our said Lady the Queen her heirs and successors to which payment well and

truly to be made we bind ourselves and every of us jointly and severally for and in the whole our heirs executors and administrators and every of them firmly by these presents.

Sealed with our seals.

Dated this day of one thousand eight hundred and

Whereas by the *Polynesian Laborers Act of 1868* it is amongst other things enacted that all persons desirous of importing laborers from the South Sea Islands shall enter into a bond with two sureties to secure the return of the laborers to their native Islands at the expiration of three years or thirty-nine moons from date of arrival at the rate of ten pounds sterling for each laborer introduced Now the condition of this obligation is such that if the above-bounden A. B. shall pay to the Immigration Agent at the rate of fifteen shillings per quarter for every Polynesian laborer in his employment for the purpose of providing a return passage for each and every South Sea Islander introduced by him under his application and also all the charges or expenses incurred by the government of Queensland in connection with the same then this obligation to be void otherwise to remain in full force and virtue.

Signed sealed and delivered by the above-bounden A. B. C. D. and E. F. in the presence of [L.S.]

I hereby certify that the above bond was duly signed sealed and delivered by the said A. B. C. D. and E. F. in my presence this day of

18

Immigration Agent [*or* Justice of the Peace].

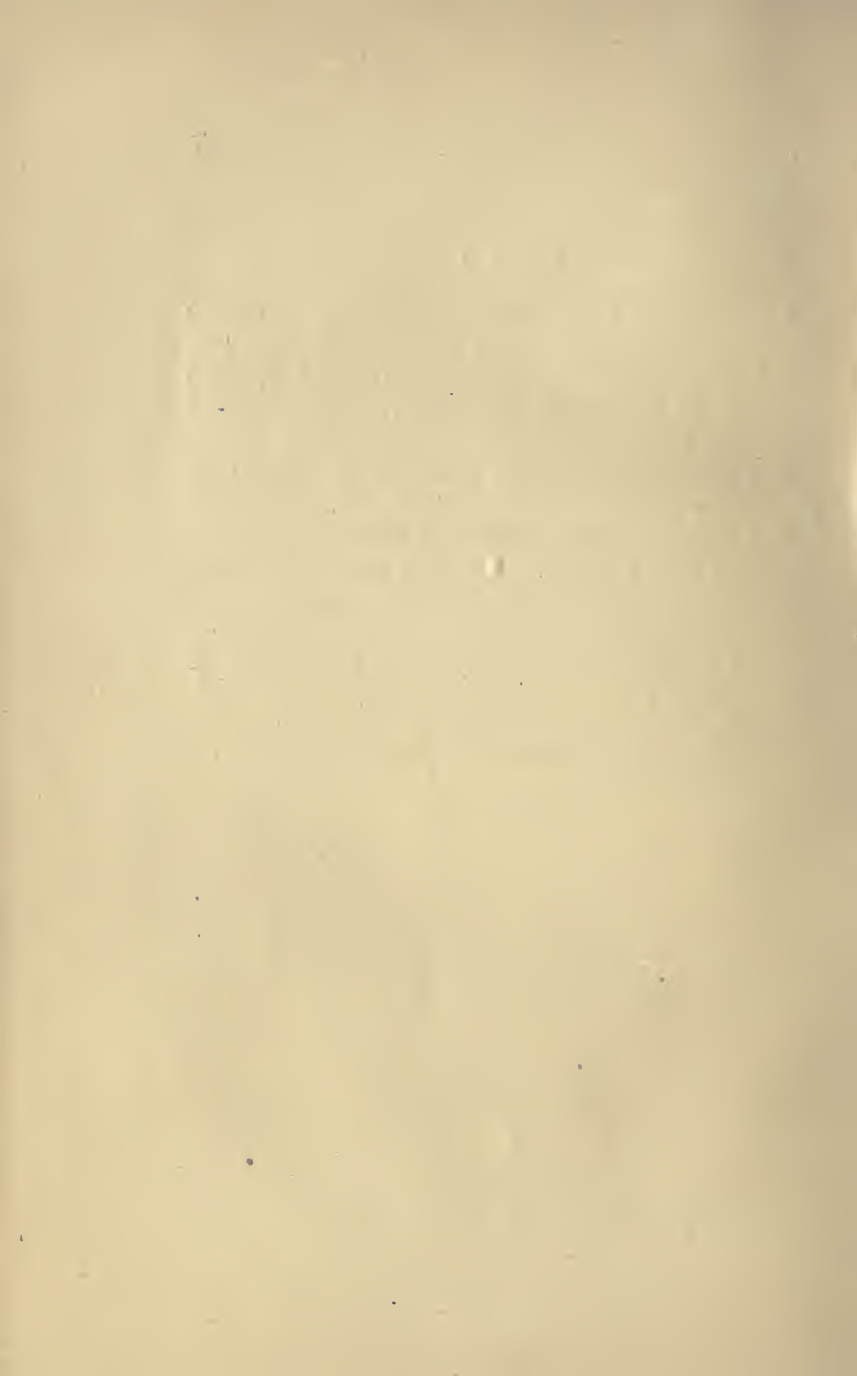
FORM L.

I hereby certify that the master of the arrived
from on the day of 186 has pro-
duced to me the necessary certificates (Form I) that the
whole of the laborers on board have voluntarily engaged
themselves &c. &c.

2. I further certify that the license (Form C) has been
produced in all cases.

3. I also certify that by careful examination of the
laborers I have ascertained that they appear to have a
proper understanding of the full meaning and effect of the
agreements and that they voluntarily entered into the same
and that the agreements have been signed in the form pre-
scribed (Form D.)

Dated at this day of 186
 Immigration Agent [*or* Officer of Customs.]



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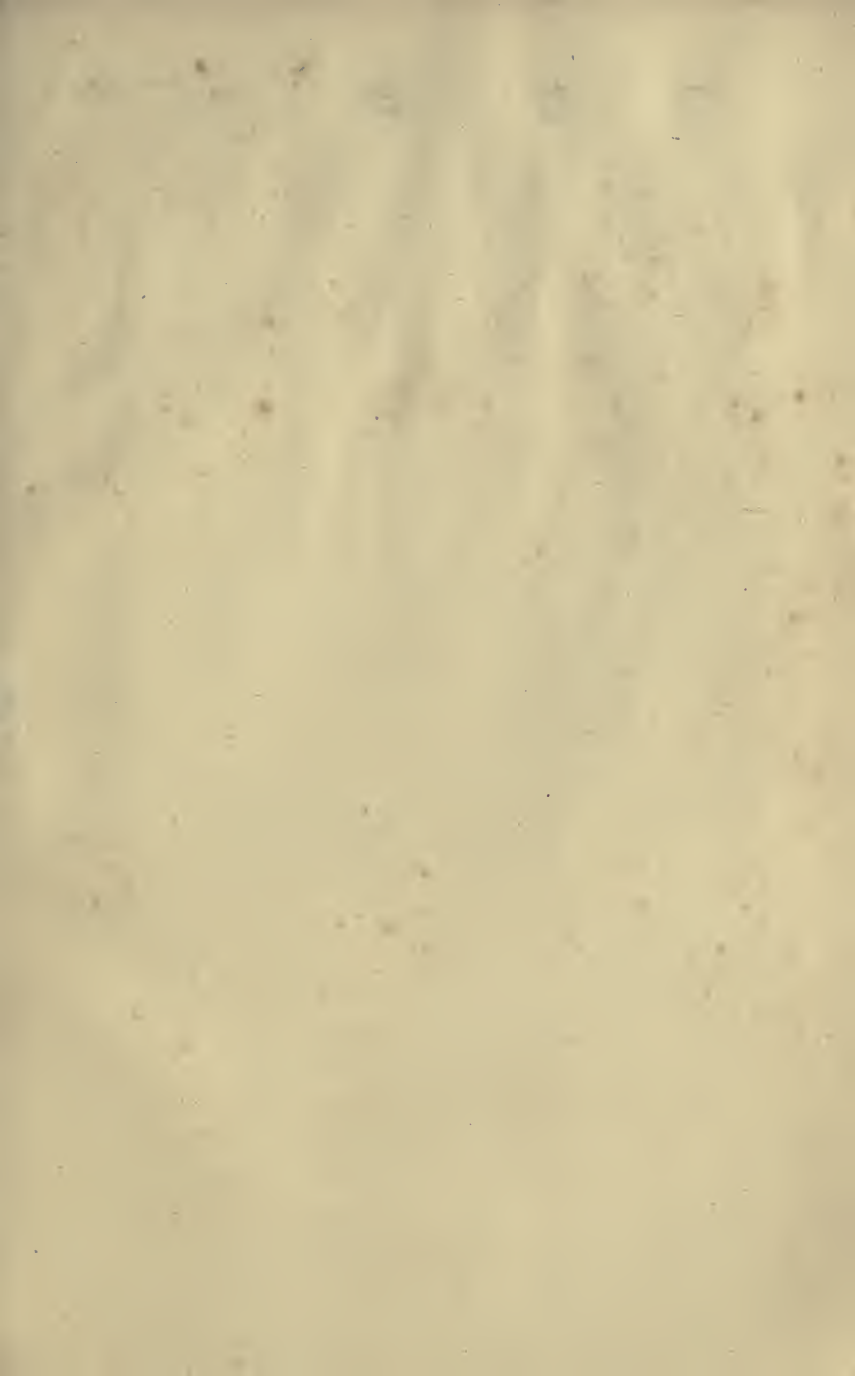
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